
AN
A P O L O G Y
FOR THE
L I F E
OF
GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY.



Y O I O A
L I F E
GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY

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OF
GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY.
LATE OF COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

To which is annexed,
Her original Letter to JOHN CALCRAFT, Esq.
advertised to be published in October 1767,
but which was then violently suppressed.

“The Web of our Life is of a mingled Yarn, good and ill
“together; our Virtues would be proud, if our Faults whipt
“them not; and our Crimes would despair, if they were not
“cherished by our Virtues.”

All's Well that Ends Well, Act 4, Scene iii.

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXXV.

AN
A P O L O G Y

FOR THE

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GEORGE BELLAMY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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VOL. I

1857

PRINTED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

AND SELLERS OF THE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
GEORGE AUGUSTUS,
PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

THE distinguished honour to be thought worthy the notice of royalty, transcends my most ambitious hopes; and adds, if possible, to my respect and duty.

HUMANITY is the characteristick of the Royal House of Brunswick. And as it was my happiness, it still is my boast, that I have been honoured with the favour of your Royal Grandfather and his illustrious Consort.—How then must my heart be elated at being likewise honoured by the patronage of the most distinguished of our gracious Sovereign's progeny.

I AM at a loss to express my sensibility at your Royal Highness's condescension in accepting of this address, after hearing that I was favoured with

your noble preceptor's permission to lay my poor work at his feet.—But liberal feelings are implanted in your bosom; which shew that you inherit the virtues of your Royal Parents.

As words are too poor to express my gratitude for this high honour, I shall beg leave to add, that this distinguished mark of your Royal Highness's goodness has made me the happiest of women; and I shall ever remain, with the profoundest respect,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most obedient,

and ever obliged,

humble servant,

G. A. BELLAMY.

TO

T O
H I S G R A C E
THE DUKE OF MONTAGUE.

MY LORD,

WITH a mind that overflows with gratitude, I solicited the honour of laying this Work at your feet—and the happiness of being thought worthy of his Grace of Montague's patronage, is too flattering not to excite in me a wish to make it known.—But in attempting to address you, I find myself, like Phæton, unequal to the task, and justly punished for my presumption.

To address your Grace in terms befitting the occasion, would require the masterly pen of a DRYDEN. And even that would prove inadequate, were it not actuated by a heart impressed with the gratitude, admiration, and respect, which mine glows with. You, my Lord, who are blest with the sentiments of a TITUS, and who were born to make the wretched happy, will, I flat-

ter myself, forgive the ambition which prompted me to request this honour.

WHEN I first had the happiness of being noticed by your noble consort, my youthful heart was elated with transport; as the being honoured with the approbation of a lady of the most refined taste, the most distinguished judgment, every mental accomplishment, together with every virtue, convinced me that I was not totally undeserving of it. From this epocha I date my theatrical advancement. The success I met with, I was greatly indebted to her Ladyship's patronage for. She stamped the effigy which made me appear sterling.

BUT it is not in my power to enumerate the favours I have received from your Grace's family. Particularly from Lord Brudenell, of whom I have often spoken with gratitude in the course of my "Apology." The numberless marks of approbation I have been honoured with by such distinguished characters, gives me a merit with myself; and I cannot esteem myself unhappy,

happy, even in my distress, as it has procured me the honour of your Grace's notice.

THE many tokens I have received of your munificence were doubly enhanced by the worth of the elevated giver; whose virtues ennoble all titles. The Earl of Cardigan could receive no addition to his honours from a ducal coronet.—Permit me, my Lord, to unite my prayers with the numerous indigents who are daily fed by your bounty, and who lift up their hearts to bless you.—Long, long may your Grace be happy in the esteem of your royal master—be revered by your illustrious pupil—be admired by the good—and adored by the unfortunate—and may your amiable progeny for ages shew themselves worthy of such a sire.

THE sensations of gratitude with which my bosom glows, are too great for language to express. And this last honour you have conferred upon me, in permitting me thus publicly to address you, expands my heart with pleasure; as it assures me of your Grace's continued patronage.

IF I am fortunate enough to afford some entertainment, by the perusal of the following pages, to the person I most respect on earth, it will give me inexpressible satisfaction. The unhappy life I lay before your Grace, has no other merit than the truth of the facts which are therein recited. I have not the presumption to impose myself as an authoress: nor should I ever have attempted to appear in print, had I not been stimulated by repeated calumnies, which have been heaped upon me, and which would not suffer me to rest, even in indigence and obscurity.

COULD I have published the letter annexed to my "Apology," as I proposed, some years ago, I flatter myself I should have appeared in a more eligible point of view than I have done. My errors, whatever they have been, will, I hope, be viewed with lenity, and my misfortunes be pitied by your Grace; who, *though spotless yourself*, possess a heart, which feels compassion for the faulty, and a soul to relieve their distresses.

FROM

FROM my earliest days have I been taught to look up to your Grace as a being of a superior nature to the most elevated race of mortals. Long before I could suppose I should be so eminently honoured with your bounty, have I held you in this distinguished estimation. And often have I heard the noble Lord that adopted me, declare, that his Grace of Montague was one of the *wittiest* men breathing, but his son-in-law the *best*.

I ACKNOWLEDGE that I can only boast of one claim to your Grace's favour, and that is founded on my *sincerity*; which has been an inmate in my bosom from my cradle. And with this assurance I flatter myself your Grace will do me the honour to believe, that I have neither aggravated my injuries, nor attempted to extenuate my faults.

HAD I the power to express my sensibility for the many favours bestowed upon me, I would attempt to convey to your Grace my public acknowledgements;

ments ; but I humbly trust you will accept the tribute of a *grateful* heart, which, whilst it beats, will be, with the profoundest respect,

Your GRACE'S,

Most humble,

most obliged,

and most obedient servant,

G. A. BELLAMY.

AN
A P O L O G Y
FOR THE
L I F E
OF
GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY.

L E T T E R I.

MRS. BELLAMY TO THE HON. MISS

London, Sept. 20, 17—.

MADAM,

IN compliance with the solicitations of yourself and many other friends; and at the same time to rescue my character from the numerous falshoods which have been industriously propagated against it; I sit down to begin an Apology for my life. Censurable I know my conduct has been, in many respects; I cannot however suppress the wish (for a wish naturally will arise in the mind, even of the most faulty) to exculpate myself from those censures which have no foundation in truth.

A review of many of the scenes I have gone through, and of the imprudences I have

have committed, cannot fail of giving me pain; but as you have frequently expressed a desire to be informed of the minutest circumstances of my life, I will endeavour to recall to my memory every transaction worth recording, and lay them before you in a Series of Letters, continued as time and opportunity shall serve. By your means, the extenuations which occur may be diffused through that circle whose good opinion I am anxious to regain; and having thus collected them for your inspection, I at some future period intend to lay them before the public. Happy shall I be, if the recapitulation of my errors and misfortunes should prove a beacon to warn the young and thoughtless of my own sex from the syren shore of vanity, dissipation, and illicit pleasures, of which remorse and misery, as I too sensibly feel, are the sure attendants.

I will hope from your friendship, that the prolixity unavoidable in the relation of such a number of events will not prove tiresome and disgusting to you. At the same time I must entreat that you will not examine this production of my pen with too critical an eye. The lenient hand of time has not yet been able to restore to my bosom that sweet tranquillity, which the unfortunate events of my life, and the corroding reflections resulting from my misconduct, have banished from it. Trusting, however,

to your goodness, I will now enter on my history.

Though I shall not, as a celebrated author has done, write volumes before I bring myself into being, yet as I have reason to believe the calamities of my life originated from events which happened long before I was born, it will be necessary to recapitulate many circumstances relative to my family, which had their existence prior to that period. The writer of a wretched production, published in the year 1761, having, among innumerable falsehoods concerning myself, presumed to mention my mother in terms of disrespect, I think it a duty incumbent on me to endeavour to rescue her memory from imputations she by no means deserves. This, consequently, renders it likewise needful to commence my narrative from the æra of her birth.

My mother was the daughter of an eminent farmer at Maidstone, in Kent, whose name was Seal. He was one of the people called Quakers; and from the produce of his hop-grounds, which were very extensive, arrived at length to such a degree of opulence, as to be enabled to purchase an estate near Tunbridge-Wells, called Mount Sion. For some years he enjoyed in comfort the fruits of his industry; but happening, one evening during the autumn, to continue too late in his grounds, he caught a cold, which

bringing on a fever, in a few days put a period to his existence.

Though my grandfather, during his life, was remarkably active, and mindful of every concern necessary to the welfare of himself and family; yet, either from a mistaken notion, too common among persons of property, or from an unaccountable negligence upon this occasion, he could not be prevailed upon to make a will; so that the whole of his effects fell into the hands of his wife, without any provision being regularly made for my mother, who was now about four years old.

My grandmother who was both young and beautiful, finding herself thus left a widow with only one child, and possessed of an independent fortune, thought there was no occasion for her to carry on the extensive concerns of her late husband, which would be attended with great care and fatigue. She therefore disposed of all the property at Maidstone, and removed to Tunbridge-Wells; and having furnished her houses there in an elegant manner, let them, during the season, to persons of the first distinction.

She was no sooner settled in her new place of residence, than her beauty and fortune attracted the attention of all the unmarried young men in the neighbourhood, particularly of those who professed the same

religious principles. She, however, withstood all their attacks for upwards of two years. But at length, unfortunately for herself and her daughter, she gave her hand to a person of the name of Bulby. Mr. Bulby was a builder of some eminence, and considered by the world as a man in affluent circumstances; and so high an opinion had my grandmother formed of his honour and integrity, during his courtship, that she imprudently married him, without reserving to herself, or child, by any written agreement, the least part of her fortune. She received from him, indeed, the most solemn assurances that they should both be liberally provided for; but she too soon had reason to repent of her want of prudence.

Among the persons of quality who occupied occasionally my grandmother's houses, was the Honourable Mrs. Godfrey, Mistress of the Jewel-Office, and sister to the great Duke of Marlborough. With this lady a daughter of Mr. Bulby's, by a former marriage, lived as her own attendant; and so great an esteem had she contracted, during her residence at Tunbridge, for my grandmother, and fondness for my mother, that she offered to bring up the latter, and to have her educated in every respect the same as her own daughter, Miss Godfrey. My grandmother, however, having at this time no reason to doubt but that her child was amply provided

provided for, politely declined the offer, but agreed, that upon Mrs. Godfrey's return to town for the winter, she should accompany, and spend three or four months with her.

That season being now come, Mrs. Godfrey set out for London; and, upon her arrival, heard that her noble brother was given over by his physicians. But having been for some time at variance with the dutchess, on account of her exposing, though reduced to a state of second childhood, the man who had rendered himself so famous; an imprudence which deservedly gave offence to Mrs. Godfrey; she had not the satisfaction of seeing him before he died. Here I must add, that the Dutcheß of Marlborough, much to her discredit, used to take the duke with her in the coach, whenever she went abroad, even upon the most trivial occasions; exhibiting as a public spectacle, the hero who had lately kept nations in awe, and whose talents in the cabinet were equal to his valour and military knowledge in the field. — Good heavens! such a ruin must surely have excited the most poignant grief in the most unfeeling breast.

Mrs. Godfrey was prevented by this disagreement from paying a visit herself at Marlborough-House, to condole with her sister-in-law on the loss their family and the nation

nation had sustained. Having, however, an inclination to know how things were conducted there, she sent her woman, Mr. Busby's daughter, to make what inquiries she could : and the latter, overcome by the importunities of her little step-sister, who had attended Mrs. Godfrey to town as proposed, was accompanied by her to see the remains of the Duke lie in state.

When they arrived at the gate of Marlborough-House they found it open, but, to their infinite surprise, met not a living creature during their passage to the room in which the body was deposited. So totally was this incomparable man neglected in the last stage of his mortal exhibition, that not a single attendant, or one glimmering taper, remained about him as tokens of respectful attention. My mother and her companion were obliged to the day-light alone for the faint view they obtained of the funeral decorations.

The melancholy and disrespectful scene she had just been witness to, was no sooner described to Mrs. Godfrey by her woman, than it had such an effect upon her as to occasion a long and severe illness ; which at length reduced her to such a state, that had she experienced the same neglectful treatment her brother had done, she must have been buried alive. For one Sunday, fancying herself better than she had been for some time, and able to go to chapel ; as she was dressing for
that

that purpose, she suddenly fell down to all appearance dead.

The screams of her woman and my mother brought Colonel Godfrey into the room; who, having probably seen instances of persons remaining in a state of insensibility for a considerable time, and afterwards recovering, directed that his lady should be immediately put into bed, and that two persons should constantly continue with her, till indubitable symptoms appeared of her decease. The consequences proved, with how much judgment the Colonel had acted. Notwithstanding the opinion of the physicians, who all declared that the breath of life was irrecoverably departed; and in opposition to the solicitations of his friends to have the body interred, he continued resolute in his determination till the Sunday following; when, exactly at the same hour on which the change had happened, signs appeared of returning sensibility. So punctual was nature in her operations upon this singular occasion, that Mrs. Godfrey awoke from her trance just as the chapel-bell was once more ringing; which so perfectly eradicated from her memory every trace of her insensibility, that she blamed her attendants for not awaking her in time to go to church, as she had proposed to do. Colonel Godfrey, whose tenderness to his lady was unremitted, taking advantage of this incident, prudently gave orders that she should by no means

means be made acquainted with what had happened, lest it should make a melancholy impression on her mind. And I believe to the day of her death she remained ignorant of it.

Had I not heard the foregoing story frequently repeated by my mother, I own I should have had some doubt of the credibility of it, as it is of so extraordinary a nature; but as I could depend upon her veracity, I can take upon me to assure you of the truth of it. What a dreadful situation must the poor lady have been in, but for her husband's resolution! I shudder at the very thought of it; as I doubt not but you also ~~do~~, whilst you are reading the account. I shall therefore take the opportunity of concluding my letter; and am, with assurances of the most perfect gratitude and respect,

MADAM,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

G. A. B.

L E T T E R II.

MRS. BELLAMY IN CONTINUATION.

Sept. 24, 17—.

MADAM,

I SHALL now return to the concerns of my own family.—In a short time after the foregoing incident happened, my grandmother found, to her inexpressible concern, that

that she had united herself to a person who had greatly deceived her with respect to his circumstances. Instead of Mr. Busby's being possessed of the property the world supposed he had, he was so greatly involved in debt, that all my grandmother's effects were seized by his creditors. So that not having taken the necessary precautions to secure a maintenance for herself and daughter, before her marriage, she was now left destitute of every means of support.

This reverse of fortune induced her to accept with thankfulness of the generous offer Mrs. Godfrey had lately made her; and she esteemed herself happy in finding so respectable an asylum for her child. But however flattering the prospect at that time appeared, from this period have I too much reason to date the commencement of my mother's misfortunes, and consequently of my own; for being now removed from under the parental eye of my grandmother, she became liable to all the arts and temptations youth and beauty are continually exposed to.

As soon as Mrs. Godfrey received my grandmother's permission, she placed my mother at a boarding-school in Queen's-Square, where her own daughter was educated; and here she remained till she arrived at the age of fourteen, when she unfortunately attracted the notice of Lord Tyrawley. This nobleman, who was in the bloom of life, and as celebrated for his gallantry as for his wit, courage,

courage, and other accomplishments, meeting accidentally with my mother, whilst she was upon a visit, was struck with her beauty, and was determined if possible to gain possession of it. And as my mother on her part was equally captivated with his assiduous addresses, and found her vanity gratified by receiving the devoirs of a person of his consequence; it is no wonder that, young and inexperienced as she was, his lordship at length succeeded in his designs. Her heart soon yielding to the soft impulse, there needed not many entreaties to induce her to elope from school. She accordingly seized the first favourable opportunity, and leaving the protection of her kind patroness, sought for happiness in the arms of her lover.

Lord Tyrawley having been so far successful, he carried his fair prize to his own apartments in Somerset-House, where she was treated with the same respect as if she had really been Lady Tyrawley. This honour he had frequently promised before her elopement to confer upon her, and he still continued to assure her that he would fulfil his engagements. Lulled therefore into security by these promises, by her own affection, and by his increasing fondness, she assumed his lordship's name, and vainly imagined herself to be as truly his wife as if the nuptial knot had been indissolubly tied.

And

And in this pleasing delirium, enhanced by all the splendour of nobility, my mother lived for several months. But as the wheel of fortune is seldom at a stand, she was now to experience a disagreeable change in her affairs. Lord Tyrawley was ordered to join his regiment in Ireland. And it became the more necessary that he should obey the order, as his own private concerns in that kingdom required his inspection. I will not pretend to describe the pangs the lovers felt upon this occasion. I shall observe that his lordship tore himself away with the utmost reluctance, and left my mother in a state little short of distraction.

On his arrival in Ireland, Lord Tyrawley found his affairs in a very different situation from what he expected. The steward, who had the management of his estates, had taken advantage of his lordship's absence and inattention, and enriched himself at his master's expence. So that instead of finding a very considerable balance in his steward's hands, as he had always concluded there was, he had the mortification to learn that he was greatly involved in debt; and as he had lived in an expensive style, the whole of his debts amounted to an enormous sum. How to extricate himself from these difficulties was the question. The only resource which presented itself to his lordship, was that of marrying a lady with a fortune sufficient to disentangle him. But to this his attachment to my mother appeared

appeared an irremoveable bar. He was convinced that she loved him too well to object to a step which could only preserve him from ruin; yet as he knew at the same time the violence of her temper, he dreaded to make the proposal to her; and it was a long while before he could resolve upon doing what would be attended with a probability of losing her for ever.

The urgency of his affairs, however, at length requiring a speedy remedy, he looked round among the single ladies of fortune within the circle of his acquaintance, and fixed on Lady Mary Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Blessington, as a proper object for his addresses; her fortune being, according to public report, thirty thousand pounds; and that lady having been heard to declare a partiality for him. She could not, indeed, boast of her charms. Her person, however, was genteel, and what was infinitely more to be prized, she was endowed with as engaging a disposition as ever woman was blest with. Alas! how hard must be her lot, to be united to a man, whose attachment to another would render him insensible of her merit!

Whilst the courtship was carrying on, the father of the lady, naturally anxious for his daughter's happiness, examined minutely into whatever concerned his intended son-in-law; and having heard much of his connection with my mother, his lordship wrote her a

polite letter, requesting to know from her the nature of it; giving her at the same time his reasons for such an inquiry.

When my mother, or Lady Tyrawley, as she was then called, received Lord Blessington's letter, she was not quite recovered from the weakness attendant on a lying-in; so that she was the less able to cope with the heart-rending information it conveyed; and she resigned herself totally to the impulse of her rage. The violence of her passion got the better of her affection, and, without listening to the dictates of prudence, she enclosed Lord Blessington every letter she had received from her lover. Among these was one she had just received by the same post, and which, as she had not broken it open, she sent unopened. In this letter Lord Tyrawley had informed her of the distressed situation of his affairs, and consequently of the sad necessity there was for his marrying some lady of fortune, to extricate him from his difficulties. He added that he should stay no longer with his intended wife than was necessary to receive her fortune, when he would immediately fly on the wings of love to share it with her. That, though another had his hand, she alone possessed his heart, and was his real wife in the sight of heaven. That, in order to testify the truth of what he advanced, he had made choice of Lady Mary Stewart, who was both ugly and foolish, in preference to one with an equal fortune, who

was both beautiful and sensible; lest an union with a more agreeable person might be the means of decreasing his affection for her.

With what indignation must the Earl of Blessington receive such incontrovertible proofs of Lord Tyrawley's perfidy! He was so exasperated against him, that he immediately forbade his daughter, on pain of his severest displeasure, ever to see or write to her perfidious lover again. But his injunctions came too late; for they had been already united in connubial bonds, without the earl's knowledge or consent.

Lord Tyrawley now found himself the victim of his own unwarrantable duplicity. Disappointed of receiving the fortune which had been the sole inducement for his marrying, and united to a woman he hated, he was truly miserable. Being, however, determined to get rid of his lady at all events, he insisted on a separation; and immediately solicited the Minister to be sent to the court of Lisbon in a public character. This was readily granted him; as no one was better qualified for such an important employment than his lordship, not only on account of his being a perfect master of the Portuguese language, but from the brilliancy of his parts, and political knowledge, which were scarcely equalled by any of his competitors.

At the time of his separation from his lady, Lord Tyrawley settled eight hundred

R 2.

pounds

pounds a year upon her, and she went to reside in the very apartments in Somerset-House my mother had lately occupied. That poor dear woman no sooner heard of the marriage of her beloved lord, than distracted at the thought, she immediately hastened from a place which must continually remind her of her lost happiness, and disappointed expectations; leaving behind her all the plate, and other presents, the fondness of the most generous of men had bestowed upon her; as she was determined to take nothing with her that should bring to her memory her faithless perjured paramour. Having brought my mother to this reversed period of her fortune, lest I tire you with too long an epistle, I will here put an end to it. Believe me to be,

Madam, &c. &c.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R III.

Sep. 17, 17—

I Concluded my last letter with an account of my mother's leaving her apartments at Somerset-House, in all the agonies of despair and resentment. It happened fortunately for her, that a relation, in consideration of my

my grandmother's contracted circumstances, had some time before left her as a legacy a house, situated in Great Queen-Street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. In this house my grandmother now resided, and by letting out part of it, together with some assistance she received from her good friend Mrs. Godfrey, procured for herself a decent subsistence. Though she had not seen her daughter since her elopement, and was much displeased with her for her imprudent conduct, yet in such a trying moment she could not refuse her admittance beneath her roof. My mother accordingly now made this her abode.

Whilst she had resided at Somerset-House and lived in splendour, one of the principal actresses belonging to Drury-Lane Theatre, whose name was Butler, had applied to her to solicit her interest on her benefit-night. An intimacy thereupon commenced between them; and during Lord Tyrawley's absence in Ireland, Mrs. Butler had frequently spent many days with my mother at her apartments. As my mother had made this lady her confidant during her more prosperous state, she now imparted to her the situation of her finances, and expectations, and consulted her on the measures she should pursue for her future maintenance.

Mrs. Butler finding there was but little probability, from her friend's present irritated state of mind, that her connection with Lord

Tyrawley would ever be renewed, advised her to take to the profession she herself followed. Though my mother's person was tall, her figure striking, and she possessed no small share of beauty, yet from an unanimated formality which appeared about her, probably from her associating in the early part of her life with the Quakers, no very sanguine hopes were to be entertained of her succeeding on the stage. However, overcome by the earnest solicitations and flattering representations of Mrs. Butler, she fixed on that track to obtain a future provision.

The London Theatres at that time not seeming to promise an advantageous engagement, it was thought most advisable that my mother should go over to Ireland; where there was great reason to expect that she would meet with support from Lord Tyrawley's friends, many of whom had been introduced to her whilst she resided at Somerset-House. This then she determined on; and leaving the son she had lately brought into the world to the care of her mother, undertook an expedition, which even when attended with every convenience is not over agreeable, alone, friendless, unprotected, and almost broken-hearted.

When she arrived in Dublin, she was received with considerable applause. But her success seems to have been more owing to the people of that kingdom not being *then* accustomed

accustomed to capital performers, than to the brilliancy of my mother's theatrical powers. She, however, continued there for several years, performing the first characters, with some degree of reputation; but a disagreement arising, at length, between the proprietors of the theatre and herself, she determined to leave that city.

After deliberating some time upon the course she should now steer, she on a sudden formed the strange and unaccountable resolution of embarking for Portugal, in order to renew her affectionate intimacy with Lord Tyrawley. His lordship, during her residence in Ireland, had repeatedly wrote to her, inviting her in the warmest terms, and conjuring her by that tenderness which had once mutually subsisted between them, to come to him: but finding his solicitations ineffectual, he had long since forborne them. In this dilemma, however, they occurred to my mother in their full force, awakened that love which had only lain dormant in her bosom, and pointed out the course she should pursue.

Notwithstanding my mother's just refusal of Lord Tyrawley's repeated invitations, and notwithstanding her betraying him to the Earl of Blessington, had been the sole cause of his lordship's long absence from his native country; yet she was received by him, on her arrival at Lisbon, with the warmest trans-

ports. But unluckily a circumstance had happened which made her presence much less agreeable now, than it would have been at the time he pressed her so fervently to come over to him. Disappointed in his hopes of renewing his connection with her, he had entered into one with a Portuguese lady, named Donna Anna; whom he had seduced from her patroness, the lady of the unfortunate Comte d'Olivarez. This being now his lordship's situation, and of which, on account of the violence of my mother's temper, he did not care to inform her; he placed her in the family of an English merchant, where she was treated with the greatest civility and respect.

Here she remained for some time in a state of perfect tranquillity, nothing transpiring relative to his lordship's new flame to disturb her peace of mind. But, as I have before observed, the wheel of fortune is continually revolving; and my mother's happiness was not to be permanent. An English gentleman, by name Bellamy, came one day to pay a visit to the merchant in whose house she was placed; when struck with her charms, and unacquainted with her situation, the Captain became so enamoured with her, that he solicited her to accept of his hand. This she repeatedly refused, without discovering her reasons for so doing.

As the offer was far from a disadvantageous one, Captain Bellamy concluded that

that some other attachment could alone prevent its being accepted ; and, as jealousy is eagle-eyed, he fixed on Lord Tyrawley, whom he observed to come sometimes to his friend's house, as the obstacle to his success. Not, indeed, that he could suppose that any thing more than an allowable friendship subsisted between his lordship and my mother, his visits being neither long nor frequent. Captain Bellamy could not, however, forbear hinting his apprehensions ; which brought on a conversation, in which he discovered to her his lordship's connection with Donna Anna, and, as an unpleasant appendix, informed her that the lady was then lying in with her second child by him.

Rage and resentment against Lord Tyrawley once more took possession of my mother's bosom ; and effected what Captain Bellamy's most strenuous solicitations were not equal to. Without allowing herself a moment's reflection, she consented to give her hand to him ; and as soon as the nuptial benediction was pronounced, set off with him for Ireland, to which kingdom the ship he commanded was bound, and then ready to sail. All this was executed with so much expedition and secrecy, that his lordship, though in such a public capacity, was not made acquainted with it till they had left Lisbon.

In a few months after the arrival of Captain Bellamy and his new-married lady at the place of their destination, to the inexpressible astonishment and dissatisfaction of the former, I made my appearance on this habitable globe. My mother had so carefully concealed her pregnancy, and her connection with Lord Tyrawley, from her husband, that he had not entertained the least suspicion of her incontinence. My birth, however, discovered the whole; and so exasperated was the Captain at her duplicity, that he immediately left the kingdom, and never after either saw or corresponded with her.

Having now informed you with how little applause I made my first entrance on the stage of life, I shall defer any further account of my subsequent appearances till I write again, which I purpose doing in a few days. Till when I remain, Madam, &c.

G. A. B.

LETTER IV.

October 2, 17—.

I WAS born on St. George's day, 1733, some months too soon for Captain Bellamy to claim any degree of consanguinity with me. As soon as Lord Tyrawley had gained

gained intelligence, after my mother's departure from Lisbon, of the place of her destination; he wrote to his adjutant, Captain Pye, who resided near Fingal, the town where she had settled, to request, if she should prove pregnant in time to conclude it was the effect of her visit to his lordship, that his lady would take the infant under her care as soon as it was born, without suffering my mother, if possible, to see it. This severe injunction of his lordship's proceeded from his entertaining a belief, that her sudden retreat from Lisbon was not in consequence of her having formed an honourable connection with Captain Bellamy, but through the natural depravity of her passions, and the fickleness of her disposition. I was, therefore, agreeable to his lordship's directions, taken from my mother soon after my birth, and put under the care of a nurse, with whom I continued till I was two years old. At that time the regiment returning to barracks in Dublin, Mrs. Pye, whose kindness I shall never forget, and whose memory I shall ever revere, took me from the nurse, and carried me with her.

Here, Madam, I must beg leave to entertain you with an anecdote of my nurse, which exhibits such a proof of the attachment and fidelity of the lower class of the Irish, as does them infinite honour. It

never occurs to my mind, but it excites the tenderest sensations; and I should deem myself ungrateful in the extreme, were I not always to mention her name with respect.

It happened that the summer, in the midst of which I was taken from the care of my foster-mother, was uncommonly hot. Notwithstanding this, so excessive was the good woman's affection for me, that she walked *every day* from the village in which she lived, to the barracks, which were three miles distant, and with a child sucking at her breast. The intense heat, united with the affliction she felt at my being taken from her, had such an effect upon her constitution, that it brought on an inflammatory fever, which put an end to her life. It is a custom in many parts of Ireland, to convey the remains of the dead to those for whom, whilst living, they appeared to have the sincerest regard; and the custom was not neglected upon the decease of my worthy nurse. Captain Pye's servants having risen one morning, upon some occasion or other, earlier than usual, and left the street door open; as I lay in bed, I heard my foster-father's voice audibly uttering what is vulgarly called the Irish howl. *Ah! why did you die?* with all its plaintive eloquence, distinctly reached my ear. Alarmed at the well-known sound, I hastily leaped out of bed, and ran almost naked into the street; where,

where, to my great grief, even at that early age, I found the lamentation now become universal around the body of my poor nurse, whose affection for me had cost her her life—Why, O thou great disposer of events! why was I born to be the cause of unhappiness, and even death to those who really loved me; whilst thy inscrutable decrees have made me subservient to those, whose vows “were false as dicer’s oaths,” and whose views were only the promotion of their own pleasure or interest?

When I had nearly obtained the age of four years, Captain Pye received directions from Lord Tyrawley to send me to France for education. His Lordship had been intimate with the unfortunate Colonel Frazer in his youthful days. And though their political principles were diametrically opposite, humanity induced him to make some provision for the Colonel’s only daughter, who was now left an orphan and destitute of support. True philanthropy will not suffer a difference either in political or religious principles to restrain its dictates.

This young lady, who was somewhat older than myself, and very amiable both in person and disposition, was fixed on by Lord Tyrawley to be my companion to France; and Mrs. Pye attended us herself to London, in order to equip us with such necessaries as
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we wanted, and to inquire out the most eligible convent in which to place us.

Whilst we were in London, the maid-servant who had the care of me, seeing my mother's name in the play-bills of Covent-Garden-Theatre, imagined she should not be an unacceptable visitor, if she took me to pay my respects to her. She accordingly inquired where my mother lodged; and, without asking her mistress's consent, led me to her. We were instantly ushered up stairs, where we found my mother in a genteel dress. Though I was too young to experience any attraction from her beauty, yet her fine clothes pleased me much, and I ran towards her with great freedom. But what concern did my little heart feel, when she rudely pushed me from her, and I heard her exclaiming, after viewing me with attention for some moments, "My God! what have you brought me here? this goggle-eyed, splatter-faced, * gabbart-mouthed wretch, is not my child! take her away!" I had been so accustomed to endearments, that I was the more sensibly affected at this unexpected salutation, and I went away as much disgusted with my mother as she could be with me.

Mrs. Pye having prevailed upon Mrs. Dunbar, an Irish lady who lived at Boulogne, to take Miss Frazer and myself under her

* A coal-boat is so called in Ireland.

her protection, we accompanied her to France. Strict orders were given that I should not be contradicted, and that if I disliked one convent, we should be removed to another. The money necessary for our support was to be remitted to Mr. Smith, a wine-merchant in that town, to whom the same injunctions were given.

On our arrival at Boulogne we were placed in the convent of the *Nunciats*, situated in the lower town. We had not been there long, before a nun was immured between the walls, the punishment usually inflicted on those of the sisters who unfortunately break their vow of chastity. The infliction of this horrid punishment affected Miss Frazer so much, and the dirtiness of the convent was so intolerably offensive, even to me, though but a child, that we determined to get removed. We accordingly applied to Mrs. Smith for this purpose, who in a short time came and conducted us to the convent of the *Ursulines* in the upper town. On mentioning the name of the convent, even at this distant period, I cannot help exclaiming, "Dear, happy, much-regretted mansion! thou sweet abode of tranquillity and delight! how supremely blessed should I have been, had I remained till this hour within thy sacred walls!"

Here we continued till I had attained the eleventh year of my age; when the mandate,

date, the dreadful mandate arrived, which bid us prepare for our return. With what heart-felt pangs did I receive it! Having no knowledge of the nobleman to whom I was indebted for my being and subsistence; and the contemptuous manner in which my mother had treated me still dwelling on my remembrance; I had not the least desire to see either of them. To stay in the convent, and still to be accompanied by my much-loved Maria, was the utmost of my wishes. The whole community, indeed, the sisters as well as the pensioners, treated me with great kindness. But one of the nuns perfectly idolized me. When I took my leave of her, my feelings were such as I am not able to describe. Their pungency was far beyond what a girl of my age could be supposed to experience. I have often thought they were a sure presage of the miseries which have attended me through life; not only such as have arisen from my own indiscretions, but those which owe their foundation to the complicated machinations of the worst of men. The former I shall recite in the following part of my narrative, without attempting to palliate, or excuse them, satisfied that nothing but the sincerest contrition will now avail. The latter I shall give an account of with the strictest regard to candour and truth; and whilst I forgive, which

which Christianity bids me do, I shall not spare.

Being now about to take my leave of France, and, at the same time, of the happy age of puerility, innocence, and peace, I shall at this regretted æra put an end to my letter, with only assuring you that I shall ever be, through every stage of my life,

MADAM,

Your ever grateful,

G. A. B.

LETTER V.

October 15, 17—

WHEN we arrived at Dover we were met by a person named Du Vall, who had once been a domestic of Lord Tyrawley's. He now kept a peruke maker's shop in St. James's-Street; and with him we were to reside, till his lordship's return from Portugal, which was every day expected. Mrs. Du Vall, his wife, was a lively, agreeable French woman, much younger than her husband, and of a rather too gay a disposition for his tranquillity. Near Mr. Du Vall lived a person whose name was Jones. He had formerly been a cutler, but at the solicitation of his wife he had opened a china and bijou shop. From the vicinity of their residence,

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an intimacy had commenced between Mrs. Du Vall and Mrs. Jones, and there was a perfect sociability between the families.

The latter was the daughter of an eminent apothecary in Westminster, who had given her what is generally termed a *genteel* education: that is, she was well versed in the fashions, and in the amusements, of the fashionable world; she spoke bad French, and could invent, with great facility, additions to the lye of the day. She had a good address, and abounded in what is usually denominated small talk. She understood the art of flattery so well as to be able to charm her female customers; and of coquetry, sufficient to captivate the men. With these advantages, it is not to be doubted but Mrs. Jones rendered her shop the resort of many respectable people. The variety of articles, engaging to a young mind, which were therein displayed, induced me to pay frequent visits to the mistress of it; who seemed much pleased with my vivacity.

During these visits, I became acquainted with most of the nobility that frequented the shop. In particular, I formed an intimacy with three ladies of quality, two of whom honoured me with their friendship to the latest periods of their lives. These were Lady Caroline Fitzroy, the Honourable Miss Conway, and Miss St. Leger.

Leger. The first, to whom I acknowledge I have lain under many obligations, has cancelled them all, by doing me the injustice to believe me capable of speaking something disrespectful of her ladyship. Her thus giving ear to the tongue of slander has prevented me from ever wishing to renew the intimacy with which she once favoured me. As I have made it an invariable rule never to hear any thing spoken in company to the disadvantage even of a common acquaintance, without endeavouring to vindicate them, (thinking it would greatly lessen me to be considered as the companion of any person of whom I entertained an unfavourable opinion) is it to be supposed I should speak ill of one to whom I was greatly obliged, and had always highly esteemed? A consciousness of not having deserved her ladyship's displeasure has supported me under it. And were all those of my own sex who are prone to speak slightly of others upon ill-grounded reports, to curb this propensity; I can assure them they would reap inexpressible satisfaction from doing so.—Pardon, my dear Madam, this digression; as one of the company, you are excepted, you know, from any implied censure.

At length the long wished for hour of Lord Tyrawley's arrival in England was announced to Miss Frazer and myself. Upon our going to Stratton-Street, where his lordship had taken up his residence, he received us both
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in the tenderest manner, but with regard to myself, he seemed to enjoy such heart-felt pleasure at the interview, that I was charmed with my reception. Donna Anna's satisfaction at seeing me was far, very far short of his lordship's. Nor was this to be wondered at, as she had several children of her own, and consequently dreaded so formidable a rival in his lordship's favour, as I was likely to prove. But her malevolent shafts were aimed at me through my beloved friend, to whom she was continually shewing marks of her dislike. Her cunning dictating to her that his lordship would not suffer any person to treat me ill, with impunity, she took this method to give me pain. And she could not have pursued a more effectual one.

As I was at that time, and have ever since been steady in my attachments, I could not bear to see my Maria treated thus unkindly. I therefore used my interest with his lordship to remove us from a place that was become disagreeable to me on more accounts than one. For though my lord lived in all the splendour a person of his rank is entitled to, and indeed much beyond his income ; yet his house had much more the appearance of a Turkish seraglio than the mansion of an English nobleman. To this may be added that the gloom and hypocrisy which were constantly visible on the countenance of his *tawney Dulcinea*, rendered it far from agreeable

able to a young creature whose spirits were, probably, too volatile. For these reasons I prevailed upon his lordship to place us at Mrs. Jones's in St. James's-Street; where, as he spent much of his time at White's Chocolate-House, he called in upon us sometimes twice a day.

Here we found ourselves very comfortably situated. But that comfort was not to be of long duration. I now began to experience the vicissitudes of fortune. For we had resided but a short time at our new abode, before I lost my much-loved companion Miss Frazer. She was seized with the measles; and, notwithstanding every care, fell a victim to that disorder. Though this young lady was some years older than myself, and of a more serious disposition, yet the regard she had always shewn me was so tender and affectionate, and so indulgent was she to my flights of fancy, as she used to term them, that whilst I loved her as a friend, I revered her as a parent.

There is, I believe, no impression that affects so strongly a young mind as the supposition of being dear to another. Though originating merely from self-love, it incites a reciprocation. The very idea that you are pleasing, stimulates you to render yourself really so, even though there be not that similarity of manners and disposition on which an union of souls is usually founded.

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My grief for the loss of this amiable young lady was so excessive, that it endangered my health ; and for some time it was apprehended that I should go into a decline. Upon this account Lord Tyrawley took a little box in Busby-Park, to which in a few days we removed. The family now consisted of his lordship, Donna Anna, three girls all by different mothers, and myself. The boys were previously sent to Mary-le-Bone school, and my own brother was at sea.

My lord's fondness for me now knew no bounds. He not only thought he perceived in my features the perfect resemblance of his own, but he flattered himself that, with the aid of due cultivation, I should likewise inherit his wit, which was universally allowed to be really brilliant.

Not long after we were at Busby-Park, Donna Anna having had the impudence to assume the title of Lady Tyrawley, during a party of pleasure in which she and the three young ladies were engaged, his lordship was so much offended thereat, that he ordered them all to return to town. So that I now had the happiness of his lordship's company for six days in the week entirely to myself. On the remaining day (Saturday) he was always of his late majesty's private party to Richmond. He usually returned to town the same evening, and came to Busby the next day.

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The company his lordship brought with him, which were chiefly the witty and the gay, soon perceived, that to make their court to him, they must be lavish in their praises of me. Accordingly, I became the object of their admiration, and was made to believe that I was actually a phenomenon. Till encouraged by the flattery I daily received, I was weak enough to conceit that I was blessed with talents which dame Nature had never bestowed upon me. Oh, flattery! delusive charm! how great is thy power, and how pernicious are thy effects! Even the old cannot withstand thy influence; how then shall the young? Open, generous, free as air, incapable of deceit, and believing others as sincere as they appear to be; easily do such fall victims to thy bewitching arts. The vanity and conceit thou art the cause of, leave a lasting impression on the mind, and too often taint the whole future life. Most carefully then should our sex guard against the insinuating venom.

With this reflection, the justice of which I doubt not, Madam, but you will readily admit, I shall conclude my letter. And in my next propose to entertain you with a laughable instance of humbled vanity.

G. A. B.

LETTER

October 28, 17—.

LORD Tyrawley having prohibited my reading *Cassandra*, the only romance in his library, and on which a girl of my age and lively disposition would naturally have first laid her hands, preferring poetry to history, I endeavoured to learn Pope's *Homer* by rote. In this I made such proficiency, that in a short time I could repeat the first three books. When I thought myself sufficiently perfect, I languished to be introduced to the incomparable author of them; not doubting but he would be as much charmed with my manner of repeating "*The wrath of Peleus' son,*" as I myself was.

It was not till after I had frequently solicited Lord Tyrawley upon this head, that he would listen to my request. At length, however, he consented, and we set off together for Twickenham. As I rode along, the suggestions of vanity overpowered every apprehension; and I was not a little elated when I reflected on the conspicuous figure I was about to make. The carriage stopped at the door. We were introduced to this little *great man*. But before I had time to collect *myself*, or examine *him*, Mr. Pope rang the bell for his housekeeper, and directed her to take *Miss*, and shew her the gardens,

gardens, and give her as much fruit as she chose to eat.

How shall I find words to express the mortification I felt upon this occasion! It is not in the power of language to describe the true situation of my mind, on finding my vanity thus humbled. It is to be supposed I was not very complaisant to the old lady. But she did not long attend me; for we had scarcely got into the gardens, before she pretended business, and left me to admire them, and eat fruit by myself.

I was not in the least displeased at the housekeeper's abrupt departure, as it gave me leisure to meditate, and contrive some method of resenting so gross an affront offered to the *infant Dacier*. For no less a personage in the world of literature did I fancy that I should be, when my amazing powers had acquired perfection. At last I concluded to carry into execution the following plan of revenge: I determined never to read the cynic's translation of the *Iliad* again, but wholly to attach myself to Dryden's *Virgil*. My heart exulted in the thought; and I experienced those sweet sensations, which arise from the hopes of being amply revenged for insult. But whilst I was indulging myself in this pleasing reverie, I was informed that the carriage waited.

I hastened to it; and when I joined Lord Tyrawley, found that he had prevailed on

the Earl of Chesterfield, who had happened to come in just after my supposed disgrace, to accompany us to Bushy. That nobleman soon made me amends for the treatment I had just received, and removed the chagrin it had occasioned. The elegant praises of a Chesterfield transported my little heart, and atoned for the casual contempt of a Pope. They filled my bosom with inconceivable pleasure, and imprest upon my memory such a partiality for the bestower of them, as was never after eradicated. Indeed, the favourable opinion he honoured me with in my profession, was not a little flattering, and claimed my warmest gratitude.

In a short time after this, Lord Tyrawley was nominated ambassador to the court of Russia. Upon which occasion one of the ladies of quality before-mentioned, desired Mrs. Jones, at whose shop I had first been honoured with her notice, to inform his lordship, that she should be happy if he would permit me to reside with her during his absence. This was too great a favour to be declined. My lord accordingly waited upon her ladyship, to return her thanks for her condescending offer, and at the same time to mention to her, his prohibition against my seeing my mother.

That unhappy woman had lately married an officer, a son of Sir George Walter, quite a dissipated boy, young enough to be her

own child. As this unnatural union had been dictated by passion, satiety and disgust soon followed; and her new husband left her to join his regiment, which was stationed at Gibraltar. But before he went off, he stripped her of every thing valuable she was possessed of, even to her apparel. This he took an opportunity of doing whilst my mother was at the theatre; and he decorated with her clothes a woman that accompanied him abroad. Such generally are the consequences of an union founded solely on passion, especially where there is so great a disparity of years. By such an imprudent connection, the erring female draws on herself the contempt and ridicule of her own sex, and exposes herself to the licentious attacks of the other.

Whether the distressed situation my mother found herself in, from the depredations committed on her property by her faithless husband, induced her to wish to see me, that I might be the means of affording her some relief, or whether her maternal feelings received additional vigour from her present distresses, I will not pretend to determine; but she applied to the very servant who had formerly met with so rude a reception from her, and whom she accused of bringing to her a supposititious child, to entreat that I would come and reside with her. In doing this, she doubtless had a view to the hundred pounds which Lord Tyrawley annually allowed me for clothes

and other incidental expences, and for paying my maid-servant.

As humanity has ever been my ruling passion, I could not bear to think that my parent, although she had been unkind to me, was reduced to a state of poverty; afflicted with illness; and abandoned by the person who ought to have been her support and protector; without feeling an inclination to afford her all the assistance in my power. Listening, therefore, only to the duteous impulse, I took with me the small sum of money I happened to have by me, together with my watch, which was of considerable value, and a few other trinkets, and hastened to my mother's house, without even taking leave of the lady who had kindly protected me. I blush at the recollection; as her ladyship certainly deserved a more grateful return. But tenderness for an afflicted parent suppressed, at that time, every other consideration.

My mother seemed to strive to make atonement for the slight she had formerly shewn me, by every proof of indulgent fondness. This affectionate attention made me ample amends for the loss of that splendour and elegance I had just left; and I esteemed myself quite happy. The little money I had brought with me, was, however, but a temporary relief. When that was expended, my mother borrowed as much as she could upon my watch and trinkets, in hopes that would supply our necessities

necessities till my quarter's salary was due. But when that wished-for hour arrived, to our great mortification, we found that it would no longer be paid, on account of my removal. My mother now discovered, that instead of alleviating her own distresses, by enticing me to be with her, she had added two persons to her family, who were obliged to look up to her for support.

An opportunity presenting itself here, by my being about to enter on a new scene of life, for breaking off; lest I should tire you, as I have done myself, I shall lay down my pen, as soon as I have assured you that I am,

Madam, &c. &c.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R VII.

Nov. 5, 17—.

HOW blind are mortals to the future! and from what trivial and apparently accidental circumstances do the success or misfortunes of our lives originate! To intend for the best is all that lies in our power; the event depends on "that unseen hand which makes all our moves." Thus my imprudent removal from the protection of the noble patroness to whose care I had

been committed by Lord Tyrawley, though the motive was in some measure allowable, as it proceeded from filial affection, laid the foundation of all those errors and subsequent misfortunes which have been my lot.—But to proceed with my narrative—

My mother had contracted an intimacy of the most friendly nature with a lady who was lately arrived from the East-Indies, where her husband was then a governor. This lady, whose name was Jackson, had come over to England for the education of her two daughters, and resided in Montpellier-Row, Twickenham, on account of her ill state of health. She was generous to excess; a propensity which her husband enabled her to indulge, by allowing her a very considerable income. As illness prevented her from going out, or seeing much company, she invited my mother to pass the summer with her. My mother accepted the invitation, and at the conclusion of the season at the theatre, took me down with her. Upon our arrival I was introduced to the young ladies, who were about my own age, and who seemed to vie with each other to gain the first place in my affections.

As we were walking out one evening, we were overtaken by the celebrated Mrs. Woffington. Having been at the same theatre in Dublin with my mother, she politely saluted

saluted her, and seemed desirous of renewing the acquaintance which had once subsisted between them. My mother shewing no reluctance on her part, Mrs. Woffington gave her a pressing invitation to spend some time with her at her house at Teddington, whither she was then going; and desired her to bring me with her.

Some unexpected company coming down soon after, to visit Mrs. Jackson, we took that opportunity to accept the invitation Mrs. Woffington had given us. During our stay at her sister's, I became acquainted with Mr. Sheridan, a celebrated actor, and a competitor of the incomparable Garrick. This gentleman invited us to his apartments, which were generally crowded with Irish gentlemen from the college of Dublin. Roscius, at this time, languished to be reconciled to Mrs. Woffington, with whom he had formerly lived upon terms of intimacy. For this purpose he obtruded himself in the house of a gentleman at Kingston, of whose talents, which were great, he was jealous to a degree, though they lay in a different line of acting. Mr. Sheridan's hospitality was as well known as Garrick's parsimony; of which the latter condescended to avail himself. I flatter myself I shall be credited in this assertion, as I declare I have no reason to be partial to the former, as will appear in the course of the ensuing letters.

The general topic of conversation among my present associates was confined to theatrical affairs; with which I was totally unacquainted till I was introduced into this circle. The charms of novelty, however, rendered it agreeable. Whilst we staid here, it was agreed on to perform the tragedy of the "Distressed Mother," in order to make a trial of Miss Polly Woffington's abilities, who was intended by her sister for the stage. My mother and Mrs. Woffington played the attendants; Mr. Garrick, Orestes; Mr. Sullivan, a Fellow of Trinity-College, Dublin, Pyrrhus; Miss Woffington, Hermione; and Andromache fell to my lot.

In this performance, though my first, Mr. Garrick observed that I was much more in earnest than the young lady who had been accustomed to theatrical amusements. And though I was inferior in beauty to my fair rival, and without the advantages of dress, which she enjoyed, yet the laurel was bestowed upon me. All the people of fashion in the neighbourhood honoured our barn with their presence. Among these was the late Sir William Young, who gave it as his opinion that I should make a figure in a capital line, if ever I came upon the stage.

Upon our return to Twickenham, we found our good friend Mrs. Jackson so much indisposed that her life was despaired of. However, through my mother's care, and a
favourable

favourable crisis in her disorder, she was in a short time out of danger. But the air of the country being judged by her physicians to be too keen for her, she took a house in Henrietta-Street, Covent-Garden : where my mother, who had now declined a profession she had never been calculated for, was easily prevailed upon to become her guest.

About this time a letter was received by Du Vall from Lord Tyrawley, in answer to one he had wrote him, in which his Lordship not only declared that he would not allow me any support, but renounced me for ever. So highly was he exasperated against me for disregarding his injunctions. As I loved his Lordship superior to the whole world, this letter harrowed up my very soul. Nor did it give much less anguish to my poor mother ; who now became sensible of her indiscretion in having induced me to leave so eligible a situation as his Lordship had placed me in, and thereby forfeit his favour, merely to procure herself a temporary relief. We were, however, obliged to submit, and resign ourselves to that fate which could not now be averted.—I have often thought since, as I have pondered o'er my misfortunes, that we owe the greatest part of the miseries we experience to our *impatience*. Not patient enough to let the designs of Providence, even when they appear to be in a favourable train, regularly and gradually develop, we fancy

we can get possession of the object we have in view by a shorter method; and having through our want of discernment broke one of the links of the chain, the wished-for happiness is gone for ever.

Forgive me, my dear Madam, for interpersing here and there these moral reflections. They at once give ease to my mind, and when they shall reach the public eye, may prove serviceable to the weaker sex; which may probably be admitted as some atonement for the errors that have occasioned them.

My mother having a long account to settle with Mr. Rich, the salaries at that time not being very regularly paid, she had frequent occasions for calling at his house. And as I had contracted an intimacy with the young ladies, his daughters, to whom I had been introduced before we went into the country, I was happy to attend my mother whenever she went.

One evening, as I was upon a visit there, we agreed among ourselves to act "Othello." They lent me the play, that I might learn my part, which was to be that of Othello, and promised me, as it was soon to be performed at the theatre, a seat in their box to see it. When we were perfect in the words, we began to rehearse. During the rehearsal, as we were only playing for our own amusement, and I concluded we were not overheard,

heard, I gave free scope to my fancy and my voice; and I really believe our performance was more perfect, as it was truly natural, than if it had been aided with the studied graces of professors. As I was raving in all the extremity of jealous madness, Mr. Rich accidentally passed by the room in which we were rehearsing. Attracted, as he afterwards said, by the powerful sweetness of the Moor's voice, which he declared to be superior to any he had ever heard, he listened without interrupting our performance; but as soon as it was concluded, he entered the room, and paid me a thousand compliments on my theatrical abilities. Among other things he said, that in his opinion I should make one of the first actresses in the world; adding, that if I could turn my thoughts to the stage, he should be happy to engage me.

Not a little vain of receiving these encomiums from a person, who from his situation must be a competent judge, I went home and informed my mother of what had happened. At first she was averse to my accepting the proposal, having experienced herself all the disadvantages attendant on a theatrical life; but Mrs. Jackson uniting her persuasions with those of Mr. Rich, she at length consented. She, however, complied only on condition that the manager would assure her of his supporting me in a capital line. This Mr. Rich agreed to do; and that the more readily, as,

in his opinion, the ladies belonging to his theatre were not altogether suited either for the characters of young heroines in tragedy, or of sprightly girls in genteel comedy. Mrs. Horton had nothing but a beautiful face to recommend her; Mrs. Pritchard's forte lay in a different walk; and Mrs. Clive's merit was always so unrivalled, that whatever I can say in praise of that darling daughter of Thalia, will not equal her desert.

Here, as I am now arrived at another principal æra in my life, that of my entrance into the theatrical world, permit me, Madam, to give a little respite to my aching fingers.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R VIII.

Nov. 21, 17—.

I SIT down once more, Madam, to continue my narrative. My entrance on my theatrical career is, if I recollect, to be the contents of this letter.

At the time I entered into an agreement with Mr. Rich, I was just fourteen; of a figure not inelegant, a powerful voice, light as the gossamer, of inexhaustible spirits, and possessed of some humour. From these qualifications he formed the most sanguine hopes
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of my success, and determined that I should immediately make trial of them. I had perfected myself in the two characters of Monimia and Athenais, and according to my own judgment, had made no inconsiderable proficiency in them. The former was fixed on for my first appearance.

Mr. Rich now thought it time to introduce me to Mr. Quin, then the most capital performer at Covent-Garden ; and capital he was, indeed, in those characters which his figure suited. This gentleman, at that period, governed the theatre with a rod of iron. Mr. Rich, though the proprietor, was, through his indolence, a mere cypher. He was, however, when he had resolved on any thing, the most determined of men. After waiting some time at the door of the lion's den, as the people of the theatre had denominated Mr. Quin's dressing-room, we were at length admitted. It is necessary here to observe, that this gentleman never condescended to enter the Green-Room, or to mix with the other performers, all of whom he was unacquainted with, except Mr. Ryan, for whom he entertained a particular friendship, which lasted till Mr. Ryan's death.

He no sooner heard Mr. Rich propose my appearing in the character of Monimia, than with the most sovereign contempt, he cried out, "It will not do, Sir." Upon which, the manager, to his infinite surprise, replied,

replied, "It shall do, Sir." I was so frightened at Mr. Quin's austere deportment, that had he requested me to give him a specimen of my abilities, it would not have been in my power. But he held me too cheap to put me to the trial. After some further altercation had passed, which was not much in my favour, Mr. Quin at last deigned to look at me, saying, at the same time, "*Child*, I "would advise you to play *Serina*, before "you think of *Monimia*." This sarcasm roused my spirits, which before were much sunk, and I pertly replied, "If I did, Sir, "I should never live to play the Orphan."

Still, however, he insisted on the *impropriety* of a child's attempting a character of such importance. But the real cause seemed to be, that he was conscious he himself could play the character of *young Chamont* with very little *propriety*, as neither his age nor figure by any means suited it, and as Mr. Garrick had gained so much reputation in the character. He concluded with saying, if Mr. Rich persisted in such an absurd resolution, he would publicly declare his sentiments upon the subject; and further, that he would not attend the rehearsals; being persuaded the manager would severely repent his having countenanced so improper an exhibition.

It may be supposed that this conversation was not very pleasing to me. As for Mr. Rich, the opposition he met with, seemed to increase

increase his resolution; and taking me by the hand, he led me out of the Dressing-Room, assuring me aloud, that, let who would oppose, he would protect me; and would let every one in the company know that he would be the *Master* of it, when he chose to be at the trouble. Before he quitted the scenes, he ordered the prompter to call a rehearsal of the "*Orphan*" the next morning. When that hour arrived, the two gentlemen who were to play my lovers, Castalio and Polydore, in order to pay their court to Mr. Quin, did not think proper to appear. Mr. Rich, however, to convince them he would be obeyed, fined them more than the usual mulct. Even Serina, who was only an attendant upon tragedy Queens, smiled contemptuously on the poor *Orphan*.

Mr. Rich kindly endeavoured, by every means in his power, to support me under this mortifying opposition: and he took a very effectual method of doing it. The dresses of the theatrical ladies were at this period very indifferent. The Empresses and Queens were confined to black velvet, except on extraordinary occasions, when they put on an embroidered or tissue petticoat. The young ladies generally appeared in a *cast* gown of some person of quality; and as at this epoch the women of that denomination were not blest with the taste of the present age, and had much more œconomy, the stage brides and
virgins

virgins often made their appearance in altered habits, rather soiled. As the manager had in his juvenile days made the fair sex his principal study, and found the love of dress their darling foible, he concluded that, as a true daughter of Eve, I was not exempt from it. He therefore thought there could be no better method of putting me in a good humour with myself, and compensating for the affronts I had lately received, than by taking me to his mercer's, and permitting me to choose the clothes I was to appear in. A circumstance which evinced his partiality, as he had always been unwilling to indulge even his first performers in this point.

The following morning Castalio and Polydore attended the rehearsal, but my brother Chamont was inexorable. Mr. Hall *mumbled over* Castalio, and Mr. Ryan *whistled* Polydore. This gentleman, from the accident of having been shot in the mouth by ruffians, had a tremor in his voice, which, till you were accustomed to it, was very disagreeable. But from his utility in playing every night, the discordance of it growing familiar to the ear, was not so displeasing. I have often heard Mr. Garrick say, that the greatest part of his merit in the character of Richard, arose from the observations he had made on Mr. Ryan's manner of playing it. Having an opportunity of seeing the piece performed at Drury-Lane-Theatre the night before my appearance, it made me more acquainted with the *jeu de théâtre*,

théâtre, than twenty rehearsals would have done. The public, who always incline to the humane side, and espouse the cause of the injured, as soon as the treatment I met with was known, took umbrage at what they termed illiberal proceeding towards a young actress, and I believe in the end, the opposition that was formed against me was of advantage to me. I own I was somewhat alarmed when I reflected on my presumption in appearing in so capital a character after the inimitable Mrs. Cibber.

At length the dreadful evening arrived. — But as so interesting an event, the bare recollection of which I still tremble at, surely deserves to be recorded in a letter by itself, I shall here put an end to this.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R IX.

Nov. 27, 17—.

THE dreaded evening at length arrived. Previous to it, Mr. Quin having in all companies declared it as his opinion, that I should not succeed; and Mr. Rich, on the contrary, having been as lavish in my praise; the public curiosity was much more excited, than if there had been no contention about me. The curtain drew up to a splendid audience, which seldom happened at Covent-Garden-Theatre, except when a new or revived pantomime was represented.

It

It is impossible to describe my sensations on my first entrance. I was so much dazzled by the lights, and stunned by the repeated plaudits, that I was for some time deprived both of memory and voice. I stood like a statue. Till compassion for my youth, and probably some prepossession for my figure, and *dress*, which was *simply elegant*, a circumstance not very customary, induced a gentleman, who was dictator to the pit, and therefore ludicrously denominated Mr. Town* to call out, and order the curtain to be dropped, till I could recover my confusion.

This caused Mr. Quin to exult so much, that Mr. Rich entreated me in the most earnest manner to exert my powers. But his entreaties were ineffectual. For when I made the next attempt, my apprehensions so totally overpowered me, that I could scarcely be heard in the side-boxes. The applause, indeed, was so universal, during the first act, for what did not reach the ears of the audience, that had I possessed my full powers of exertion, they could not have profited by them.

The manager having pledged himself for my success, he had planted all his friends in different parts of the house, to insure it. But when he found that I was unable to raise my spirits, he was as distracted as if his own fate, and that of his theatre, had depended upon it.

* Mr. Chitty.

He once more had recourse to persuasion and encouragement; but nothing could rouse me from my stupidity till the fourth act. This was the critical period which was to determine my fate. By this criterion was I, as an actress, to stand or fall. When, to the astonishment of the audience, the surprise of the performers, and the exultation of the manager, I felt myself suddenly inspired. I blazed out at once with meridian splendour; and I acquitted myself throughout the whole of this most arduous part of the character, in which even many veterans have failed, with the greatest éclat.

Mr. Quin was so *fascinated* (as he expressed himself) at this unexpected exertion, that he waited behind the scenes till the conclusion of the act; when lifting me up from the ground in a transport, he exclaimed aloud, "Thou art a divine creature, and the true spirit is in thee." The audience, likewise, honoured me with the highest marks of their approbation. As for Mr. Rich, he expressed as much triumph upon this occasion, as he usually did on the success of one of his darling pantomines.

The performers, who, half an hour before, had looked upon me as an object of pity, now crowded around me to load me with compliments of gratulation. And Mr. Quin, in order to compensate for the contempt with which he had treated me, was warmer, if possible, in his eulogiums, than he had been in his sarcasms.

This,

This, I own, appears to be a bold assertion, as the pungent salt of his satire often got the better of the goodness of his heart; which I have reason to think one of the best that ever inhabited mortal's bosom.

The novelty of such success attending a *child* (for from my appearance I could not be judged to be so old as I really was) against the united force of a Garrick and a Cibber, attracted the notice of the public so much, that the piece was performed three nights successively. This was a singular circumstance at that time, as the "Orphan" was an old play, much hackneyed, and supported by only one character. For though Mr. Quin was most justly celebrated, as I have already observed, in every character which his figure and time of life suited, yet as he was now near sixty, and rather corpulent, he certainly was a very unfit brother for a girl of my age. So flattering a reception, it may be naturally supposed, elated a heart rendered vain by praises surpassing my most sanguine expectations.

Mr. Quin being thus become my friend, he made inquiry relative to my mother's character and circumstances, with which he appeared to be totally unacquainted, notwithstanding she had performed at the same theatre with him for years. Being satisfied with the inquiries he made, he was determined not to oblige by halves. Finding I was the reputed daughter of his old friend

Lord

Lord Tyrawley, in order not to alarm our fears, or mortify the dignity of our minds, he enclosed a bank bill in a blank cover, and sent it to my mother by the penny-post. And not satisfied with having administered to our wants, he took every opportunity of shewing us respect. In particular, he favoured me with a general invitation to the suppers he usually gave four times a week; enjoining me at the same time never to come alone; "because," as he jocularly said, "he was not too old to be censured."

All the literati of the age frequented these parties, where wit, repartees, bon-mots, conviviality, and good cheer, went hand in hand. The conversation at these repasts turned on the literary productions of the day. And as most of the gentlemen present were themselves authors, they either candidly acknowledged the merit of the works which were the subject of discussion, or with perfect good-breeding, and true critical knowledge, pointed out their defects.

It is worthy of remark, that all characters have their bright and shaded parts. The more splendid the one, the deeper generally are the traits of the other. Thus it was with Mr. Quin; who, with the most liberal mind and benevolent heart, had his whims, his prepossessions, and his prejudices; many of which he frequently expressed in language somewhat too sarcastic, and not over delicate.

But perfection is not to be expected in this transitory state.

From some passages in several of the foregoing letters, it may be observed, that learned conversations were not unacceptable to me. And I found my judgment more enlightened by the remarks made at Mr. Quin's *petits soupers*, than if I had read all the literary productions which made their appearance at that time. Mrs. Jackson usually did me the honour to accompany me there; where she one evening met with a relation she had not seen for some years; and who should this be, but Mr. Thomson, a gentleman not less celebrated for his goodness, than for his admirable poetical works, "The Seasons, &c."

Whilst Mr. Quin is the immediate subject of my pen, I will beg leave to relate an anecdote of him, which will be for ever imprinted on *my* memory, and does infinite honour to *his*. During the time he had the chief direction at Covent-Garden Theatre, he revived "The Maid's Tragedy," written by Beaumont and Fletcher. In it he played the character of Melantius; Mrs. Pritchard, Evadne; and myself, Aspasia. One day, after the rehearsal was finished, he desired to speak with me in his dressing-room. As he had always carefully avoided seeing me alone, I was not a little surprised at so unexpected an invitation. My apprehensions even made me fear that I had, by some means or other, offended

offended a man, whom I really loved as a father. My fears, however, were not of long duration. For as soon as I had entered his dressing-room, he took me by the hand, with a smile of ineffable benignity, and thus addressed me; "My dear girl; you are vastly followed, I hear. Do not let the love of finery, or any other inducement, prevail upon you to commit an indiscretion. Men in general are rascals. You are young and engaging, and therefore ought to be doubly cautious. If you want any thing in my power, which money can purchase, come to me, and say, "James Quin, give me such a thing," and my purse shall be always at your service." The tear of gratitude stood in my eye, at this noble instance of generosity; and his own glistened with that of humanity and self-approbation.

With a story, so much to the honour of that worthy man, and so pleasing, even in recollection, to myself, will I conclude this letter.

G. A. B.

LETTER

Dec. 7, 17—.

WHAT little merit I had, was soon after rendered more conspicuous by my undertaking the part of Eudofia, in "The Siege of Damascus," at a night's notice, on the sudden indisposition of Mrs. Pritchard. Upon these occasions, the audience are always peculiarly indulgent, and so I found them. The public thought they discovered from this promptitude, indelible marks of genius, much superior to those naturally to be expected from a girl so recently engaged in a profession, a perfect knowledge of which was only to be attained by a length of time, and the closest application.

I had likewise, about this period, the happiness to acquire the approbation and patronage of two ladies of the first distinction; the late Dutchess of Montague, then Lady Cardigan, and her Grace of Queensberry. Both these ladies favoured me with their support, so far as to grace the theatre whenever I performed. An attention which was the more flattering, as the latter had not honoured a playhouse with her presence since the death of her favourite Gay.

As Mr. Rich could not afford, from the receipts of the theatre, to allow me a salary equal

equal to the success I met with, and the capital parts I performed, he gave me a benefit, free of all expences, upon one of his *own* nights, in order to prevent discord in the company. Though the public appeared to be much interested in my favour, yet as I had but few friends, except those who out of civility to Mr. Quin espoused my interest, I had very little reason to expect that it would prove lucrative.

Some days before that fixed for my benefit, I received a message whilst I was at the theatre, to be at Queensberry-House the next day by twelve o'clock. As I thought it likewise incumbent on me to wait on the Countess of Cardigan, who had honoured me with equal marks of approbation, I dressed myself early, and, taking a chair, went first to Privy-Garden. I had there every reason to be pleased with the reception her ladyship gave me, who joined politeness to every virtue.

But at Queensberry-House, my reception was far otherwise. Her Grace was determined to mortify my vanity, before she promoted my interest. Quite elated with Lady Cardigan's flattering behaviour, I ordered the chairmen to proceed to Queensberry-House. Soon after the rat-tat had been given, and my name announced to the porter, the groom of the chambers appeared. I desired him to acquaint her Grace, that I

was come to wait upon her. But how was I surpris'd, when he returned and inform'd me, that her Grace knew no such person! My astonishment at this message was greatly augmented, by the certainty I entertain'd of a ready admittance. I assur'd the domestic, that it was by the Dutchess's own directions, I had taken the liberty to wait on her. To which he replied, that there must have been some mistake in the delivery of it. In this mortifying situation, I had nothing to do, but to return home. Ludicrous and humiliating as the foregoing scene must be, I cannot avoid relating it, as it may serve as a lesson to many, who too readily give way to the impulses of vanity. Young minds are naturally prone to it. Mine consequently was. And this well-timed rebuke, however grating, was the greatest proof of regard her Grace could have given me.

I went home with no very pleasing sensations, as I expected to receive the taunts of a female relation upon the occasion, who had lately arrived from Ireland, and on whom my mother doated. As this person will be frequently mentioned in the course of my narrative, and was the cause of many of the inconveniences I afterwards suffered, it may not be amiss to acquaint you, that her deformed body was a fit receptacle for her depraved mind.

According

According to Hogarth's rules, indeed, her person may be said to abound in all the graces annexed to the idea of beauty, as she had not a straight line about her. And her mind was no less crooked than her body. She had taken a dislike to me on her first coming over; but for what reason I cannot account; and her aversion seemed to increase with my success on the stage. To such a height was it now risen, that it was the cause of much unhappiness to me. So that I was at length obliged to complain to Mrs. Jackson, who requested my mother to provide for her elsewhere, but without effect.

According to my expectations, I had no sooner returned from Queensberry-House, and informed my mother of the reception I had met with there, than this relation persuaded her that the invitation was merely a chimera of my own brain, generated by my insupportable vanity. So virulent was her behaviour, that in order to avoid her sarcasms, I pretended business at the theatre, in the evening, and went there.

Upon my entering the Green-Room, I was accosted by Prince Lobkowitz, who was then here in a public character, requesting a box at my benefit, for the *corps diplomatique*. After thanking his Highness for the honour intended me, I informed him they might be accommodated with a stage-box; and sending for the housekeeper, desired he would make

an entry in his book to this purpose. But how great was my surprise, when he acquainted me I had not a box to dispose of; every one, except those of the Countess of Cardigan, the Dutchess Dowager of Leeds, and Lady Shaftesbury, being retained for her Grace the Dutchess of Queensberry. I could not help thinking but the man was joking, as he himself had delivered me the message from her Grace the night before, and that I found to be a deception. He however still persisted in what he said, and further added, that the Dutchess had likewise sent for two hundred and fifty tickets. This made me more at a loss to account for the cavalier treatment I had received in the morning.

Here, lest you complain of the length of my letters, I will leave off.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R X I.

Dec. 23, 17—.

HIS Highness Prince Lobkowitz descended to put up with a balcony for himself and friends; and I hastened home, at once to make known to my mother my good fortune, and to retaliate upon my inimical relation. To add to my satisfaction, when I got home, I found a note from

from her Grace, desiring I would wait upon her the next morning. This being such an evident proof of my veracity, which it had given me inexpressible uneasiness to have doubted, I experienced proportionable pleasure from it.

I was, notwithstanding, so apprehensive of meeting with a second mortification, that I determined to *walk* to Queensberry-House, to prevent any person's being a witness to it, should it happen. I accordingly set out on foot, and was not totally free from perturbation when I knocked at the gate. I was, however, immediately ushered to her Grace's apartment, where my reception was as singular as my treatment had been the day before; her Grace thus accosting me: "Well, young woman!—What business had you in a chair yesterday?—It was a fine morning, and you might have walked. You look as you ought to do now" (observing my linen-gown). "Nothing is so vulgar as wearing silk in a morning.—Simplicity best becomes youth. And you do not stand in need of ornaments.—Therefore dress always plain, except when you are upon the stage."

Whilst her Grace was talking in this manner to me, she was cleaning a picture; which I officiously requesting her permission to do, she hastily replied, "Don't you think I have domestics enough if I did not choose to do it myself?"—I apologized for my

presumption, by informing her grace that I had been for some time at Jones's, where I had been flattered that I had acquired a tolerable proficiency in that art. The Dutches upon this exclaimed, "Are you the girl I have heard Chesterfield speak of?" Upon my answering that I had the honour of being known to his Lordship, she ordered a canvas bag to be taken out of her cabinet, saying, "No person can give Queensberry less than gold. There are two hundred and fifty guineas, and twenty for the Duke's tickets and mine, but I must give you something for Tyrawley's sake." She then took a bill from her pocket-book, which having put into my hands, she told me her coach was ordered to carry me home, lest any accident should happen to me, now I had such a charge about me.

Though the conclusion of her Grace's whim, as it might justly be termed, was more pleasing than the beginning of it, and her munificence much greater than that of the Countess of Cardigan, yet I must acknowledge I was much better pleased with the reception I met with from her ladyship, who honoured me with her protection whilst I continued on the stage.

There is a manner in conferring obligations which renders them doubly valuable. The most beneficent actions lose their worth when accompanied with a disgusting sense of superiority ;

superiority ; whilst the smile of courtesy makes even trivial favours acceptable.

My benefit surpassed my most sanguine expectations. And as I had by this time many who professed themselves my admirers, they had, upon this occasion, an opportunity of shewing their generosity without offending my delicacy.

Among those who paid me the greatest degree of attention was Lord Byron, a nobleman who had little to boast of but a title, and an agreeable face ; and Mr. Montgomery, now Sir George Metham. As I would not listen to any proposals but marriage and a coach, Mr. Montgomery honestly told me, early in his devoirs, that he could not comply with the first, as his only dependance was on his father, whose consent he could not hope to procure ; and as for the latter, he could not afford it. Having come to this eclaireissement, he immediately retired into Yorkshire. The generous conduct of this gentleman (whose passion I was well convinced was sincere) in not attempting to deceive me, made an impression upon my mind greatly in his favour.

As my next epistle is to contain strange and surprising adventures, and these not the produce of the writer's imagination, but as *true* as wonderful, I will beg your permission to break off here ; and lest you accuse me of a want of variation in the conclusion of my

letters, I shall end this in the good old-fashion way: So no more at present, from, Madam, your humble servant, to command,

G. A. B.

LETTER XII.

Jan. 1, 17—.

A GLEAM of cheerfulness coming over me just as I was finishing my last letter, I concluded it in rather too humorous a manner. I now return to my history, and that gloom which the recollection of my misfortunes naturally brings with it.

Lord Byron still pursued me; and as his vanity was hurt at my rejecting him, he formed a resolution to be revenged of me for my insensibility. His Lordship was very intimate with a person who was a disgrace to nobility; and whose name I shall conceal through tenderness to his family. This nobleman was Lord Byron's confidential friend; a word as often misused as that of lover, by such as are unacquainted with those delicate feelings which are essentially necessary to constitute either real friendship or love. To this friend Lord Byron committed the execution of his revenge. The Earl of ———, which was the title of this infamous pander, had believed himself to be in love with a young lady, between

between whom and myself there was the strictest intimacy. And he imagined it would promote his designs upon her, could he first accomplish my fall from the paths of prudence and virtue.

For this purpose his lordship frequently called at Mrs. Jackson's, though much against my mother's inclinations. But as he had been constantly a dangler behind the scenes during her engagement at the theatre, and had occasionally given her franks, she admitted his visits. It was however with such visible reserve, as must have convinced him they were far from agreeable. But the confidence of nobility making him assured, his Lordship persisted in calling, in defiance of her coolness. My mother had strictly enjoined me to break off my intimacy with the young lady who was the object of the Earl's pursuit, on account of her levity; and because, though by birth a gentlewoman, she had degraded herself, by becoming the companion of a lady of quality who had frequently eloped from her Lord.

My mother at this period was become a confirmed devotee. Religion engrossed so much of her time, that in the evening she was seldom visible. Upon this account, and from Mrs. Jackson's accompanying me so frequently to Mr. Quin's suppers, that lady conferred a great part of the friendly regard she had once borne my mother, to me. But,

alas! I was not to profit long by this revolution. My happiness was to be as transient as the sunshine of an April day. This part of my mother's fortune, at least, I inherited; and like her was constantly experiencing the vicissitudes of life. The following anecdote will however shew that my misfortunes were not always the consequence of my own imprudent conduct, but sometimes of such deep-laid plans of villainy and deception, as it was impossible for an unexperienced girl, at my time of life, to guard against.

One Sunday evening, when this *ignoble Earl* well knew my mother would be engaged, he called to inform me that Miss B——, the young lady before mentioned, was in a coach at the end of Southampton-Street, and desired to speak with me. Without staying to put on my hat or gloves, I ran to the coach; when, to my unspeakable surprise, I found myself suddenly hoisted into it by his Lordship, and that the coachman drove off as fast as the horses could gallop.

My astonishment for some time deprived me of the power of utterance; but when I was a little recovered, I gave free vent to my reproaches. These his Lordship bore with a truly philosophic indifference, calmly telling me that no harm was intended me; and that I had better consent to make his friend Lord Byron happy, and be happy myself, than oppose my good fortune. To this he added that
his

his friend was shortly to be married to Miss Shaw, a young lady possessed of a very large fortune, which would enable him to provide handsomely for me. I was so struck with the insolence of this proposal, that I remained for some time quite silent.

At length the coach stopped in a lonely place at the top of North-Audley-Street, fronting the fields. At that time Oxford-Street did not extend so far as it does at present. Here the Earl got out, and took me into his house. He then went away, as he said, to prepare a lodging for me, which he had already seen at a Mantua-Maker's in Broad-Street, Carnaby-Market, and to which he would come back and take me. He assured me the mistress of the house was a woman of character; and added, with the most dreadful imprecations, that no violence was intended.

His Lordship now left me. And as the fear of great evils banishes every lesser consideration, I determined to wait the result, with all the patience I was possessed of. The dread of being left alone in that solitary place, was nothing when compared with my apprehensions from the machinations of two noblemen so determined and so powerful. Terror however so totally overwhelmed my mind, that I remained in a state of stupefaction.

It was not long before his Lordship returned; and with him came the person I

least expected to see—my own brother. Good heavens! what comfort, at so critical a juncture, did the sight of him afford me! I instantly flew into his arms; but was repulsed by him in so violent a manner, that I fell to the ground. The shock of this unexpected repulse, just as I hoped to have found a protector in him, was more than my spirits were able to bear. It deprived me of my senses. On my return to sensibility, the only object that presented itself to my view was an old female servant, who told me she had orders to convey me to the lodging which had been prepared for me.

The first thing I did was to make inquiry concerning my brother's coming so unexpectedly. I was informed by the old woman, that he had bestowed manual chastisement upon my ravisher. But as he seemed to suppose that I had consented to the elopement, he had declared that he would never see me more, but leave me to my fate. The woman added, that he had threatened the Earl and his associate with a prosecution, which had so intimidated her master, that he had given her orders to remove me out of his house as soon as possible; as my being found there might make against him.

When we arrived in Broad-Street, I discovered, to my great satisfaction, that the mistress of the house, whose name was Mirvan, worked for me as a Mantua-Maker, though I was till now unacquainted with her place
of

of residence. I told her my story simply as it had happened; and my appearance, as well as my eyes, which were much swelled with crying, was an undeniable testimony of the truth of my assertions.

I afterwards learnt the following circumstances relative to my brother, about whom I was more anxious than for myself, as I had a great affection for him. We had long expected him to return from sea, he having been abroad for some years; and by one of those extraordinary freaks of fortune which are not to be accounted for, he got to the top of Southampton-Street just as the coach was driving off with me. I should have termed his coming providential, had he not suffered his suspicions to get the better of his affection, and thus counteracted the apparent designs of Providence in affording me relief.

He had reached Southampton-Street, as I have just said, nearly about the time I was forced into the coach; and ran to rescue the person thus treated, little imagining it was his own sister; but the furious driving of the coachman rendered his design abortive. Upon this he proceeded to Mrs. Jackson's house, and had scarcely inquired for me, than that Lady cried out, "Oh fly, Sir, to her relief; " Lord ——— has this moment run away " with her." My brother hearing this, concluded I must have been the person he had

just seen carried off. But knowing it would be impossible to overtake the coach, he thought it more prudent to go directly to the Earl's house. Not finding him at home, he walked about within sight of the door, till his Lordship returned, when he accosted him in the manner before related. From the Earl of ———'s my brother went to Marlborough-Street to Lord Byron's; and accusing him of being concerned with the Earl in seducing his sister, his Lordship denied having any knowledge of the affair, which he solemnly asserted *upon his honour*; declaring at the same time, as indeed he could do with a greater degree of truth, that he had not seen me that evening.

My brother placing an implicit confidence in the assertions of Lord Byron, grew enraged against me; and without making any inquiries, whether I was really culpable upon this occasion or not, concluded me to be depraved enough to enter into an illicit connection with an old unprincipled married man. Giving me over therefore as a lost abandoned girl, he immediately set out for Portsmouth, and left me unprotected. This I may justly consider as the most unfortunate event I had hitherto experienced; for being deprived of his protection at a time when it was so extremely requisite to my re-establishment in life, I was left open to the attacks of every insolent pretender, whose
audacity,

audacity, his very character, as he was distinguished for his bravery, would have repressed.

Being unwilling to break the thread of so interesting a part of my history, I have made this a very long letter, but as a breathing place here presents itself, I will, with your permission, avail myself of it, and conclude,

G. A. B.

L E T T E R . XIII.

Jan. 18, 17—.

I SOON found that my elopement had been most grossly misrepresented in the news-papers. Every thing that ill-nature could suggest, was lavishly bestowed upon me, notwithstanding I was innocent of the least depravity of the kind imputed to me, even in thought. I wrote to my mother to endeavour to retrieve her favour, which I had so unmeritedly lost; but she returned my letters unopened. I had no apparel but what I had on, and the relation I have mentioned prevented any from being sent me. The vexation and fright which my disappearance had occasioned to Mrs. Jackson, affected that lady so much, that she was confined to her bed; else I might have expected her kind interference in my behalf.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mirvan, the person where I lodged, very obligingly procured me necessaries, and did every thing in her power to comfort me. But her endeavours were ineffectual. I could not forbear viewing with horror my wretched situation, every hope being now extinguished, as my mother's misguided tenderness had exposed me, in the course of two days, to the censure of the whole town.

What was now to be done! I had no friend, no person to look up to for protection. Though every circumstance tended to exculpate me; and though Mrs. Mirvan could vouch for me, that I had not received a visit from a single person since I had been in her house; any declarations of my innocence would be now needless; for to whom could I make them? My mother was inexorable to every application; Mrs. Jackson was not within the reach of application; my inveterate kinswoman, like another Cerberus, guarding every avenue; my brother had left town; and I was too much depressed by the public scandal to attempt a reinstatement in the theatrical line.

The anguish of mind I felt from all these considerations so greatly affected my frame, that a slow fever was the consequence, which nearly brought me to the grave.

"The sting of slander strikes her venom deep."

CLEONE.

And

And never did poor creature suffer more shame and distress of mind from a *real* crime, than I did from a *supposed* one.

The fever at length yielding to my youth and the goodness of my constitution, I was ordered into the country by my physician, for the re-establishment of my strength. As I needed some pecuniary assistance to do this, having no money with me, Mrs. Mirvan kindly offered to supply my wants, and I was necessitated to accept of her offer. After considering for some time of a proper place to resort to on this occasion, I fixed on paying a visit to a female relation of my mother's, who lived at Braintree in Essex. The family of this relation being Quakers, there was little probability of their having heard of my disgrace. A few months before, a sister of Mrs. Clarke's, which was my cousin's name, had bequeathed me three hundred pounds, on condition that I never went on the stage; but my engagement at Covent-Garden having disannulled her legacy, it had never been claimed.

As soon as I was enabled by my kind hostess to make proper preparation for my journey, I set out in the stage-coach; taking care to observe the lesson, with regard to my dress, which her Grace of Queensberry had given me; that is, I had adopted Horace's maxim of *simplex munditiis*. This attention to the simplicity and neatness of my apparel answered

answered a purpose I had not foreseen or designed; it so far deceived Mrs. Clarke, that she concluded I was one of her own sect, which procured me the more cordial reception. The whole family were so prejudiced in my favour by this unintended deception, that the best of every thing Clarke-Hall afforded was bestowed upon me with the greatest cheerfulness. I had not indeed dressed myself with the studied formality of a rigid Quaker, but only so plain and neat as to entitle me to the denomination of a *wet* Quaker; a distinction that arises chiefly from the latter's wearing ribbands, gauzes, and laces. I admire many of the principles of this apparently honest, sincere, and cleanly people; but have not many instances fallen within your observation, Madam, where a broad-brimmed hat and sad coloured coat, or a green apron and plain linen, have covered a prouder heart than all the gay pomp of a birth-day suit? I think I have been able to make such a remark more than once.

My pallid countenance presenting a sure indication of my having been ill, and of the necessity there was for my coming into the country; this, added to the natural want of curiosity in my cousins, prevented me from being obliged to frame excuses for my visit. They luckily supposed I came to claim my legacy, and received me with great goodwill.

will. The day after my arrival, they paid me the interest due on it, which enabled me to remit the friendly Mrs. Mirvan a part of what I stood indebted to her; and in a few days, without inquiring whether I had not forfeited it, they paid me the whole sum. I acknowledge that I made no scruple of receiving what they did not stand in need of, as they were in very opulent circumstances, and had no children.

After the perturbations I had lately experienced, this sweet place appeared a paradise to me. Peace, plenty, content, and innocence, accompanied by cheerfulness, their sure attendant, seemed to have taken up their abode here, preferring this humble situation to the lofty domes and splendid cares of higher ranks. And here for some time I enjoyed perfect tranquillity.

Thus tranquil and happy, I will put an end to my letter, before any rude reverse breaks in to interrupt my felicity.

LETTER XIV.

Jan. 27, 17—.

IN a few weeks I was so perfectly recovered that not the least vestige remained of my illness. The apothecary, who had attended me, was of the same persuasion as my

my cousins; and being deceived, as they had been, by the Quakerishness of my dress, (excuse the new coined word) seemed to shew a partiality in my favour, which my relations did not discourage. At the annual fair, which in those country places is the season of festivity and enjoyment, my formal suitor gave my relations and myself an invitation to his house, which he had decorated with flowers, and stored with every good thing that was to be purchased, to shew his regard for me. But that blind lady, dame Fortune, who dispenses both her favours and her frowns sometimes in a strange manner, was determined I should not enjoy my present tranquillity long. In an ill-natured fit, she brought about an event, which deprived me at once of my cousin's favour, and my admirer's attachment.

The well-known Zachary Moore, as distinguished for his misfortunes as his dissipation, happened accidentally to be, at this period, in the neighbourhood of the place to which we had been invited; and, unluckily for me, to be introduced by a friend to the apothecary, to share in the feast of which we partook. This gentleman had once been possessed of an income of twenty-five thousand pounds per annum. But not being endowed with a proportionable share of prudence, he found himself at length reduced, through his own extravagance, and the chicanery

canery of his steward, to the most humiliating necessity. And what is very extraordinary, the wretch who had thus juggled him out of a princely fortune, had the audacity to propose to him to take his daughter to wife; on which condition he would agree to return him back the whole of the estate he had deprived him of. Mr. Moore nobly, in my opinion, rejected the disgraceful offer. The generality of his acquaintance, however, notwithstanding they could not but admire his magnanimity upon the occasion, blamed an imprudence, in consequence of which he was necessitated, at forty years of age, to accept of an ensigncy in a regiment that was ordered to Gibraltar.

How embittered must be the reflections of a person capable of such imprudence and inattention! The loss of an estate of such immense value could not have been completed without numberless instances of both. And though the chicanery of his steward may be considered as some palliation of Mr. Moore's want of attention; indolence in the extreme must have marked the progress of it. A proper attention to the prudential concerns of life without meanness and avarice on the one hand, or indolence and profuseness on the other, is a duty which every person of property owes to himself, to his connections, and to the community at large.—But to return from this digression.

Nothing

Nothing happened to interrupt the harmony of the company, or that could give me uneasiness, till the afternoon; when upon Mr. Moore's acquaintance whispering to him, that I was a wet Quaker, for whom his friend the apothecary had an inclination, that gentleman, without intending me any injury, gave way to his volatile disposition, and thus exclaimed loud enough to be heard by the whole company, "A wet Quaker, indeed! It is Miss Bellamy the celebrated actress, who met with so much applause the last winter at Covent-Garden-Theatre!" The confusion visible in my countenance; as soon as he had made this discovery, convinced him that he had committed some error; but, like Marplot, he could not find out what it was.

As Mrs. Clarke took no notice, at the time, of the conversation that had just passed, I was in hopes she had not attended to what Mr. Moore had said. She, however, soon after ordered the carriage, and left her husband, who loved his bottle, to enjoy the conviviality of the gay Londoner. After we were gone, Mr. Clarke inquired more particularly concerning me; and learnt from Mr. Moore every thing relative to the unfortunate event which had lately befallen me. And upon that gentleman's adding that he believed all the world now concluded me innocent, my relation, who, though a Quaker,

ker, did not want pride, and whose courage was now roused by the juice of the grape, thought, as a branch of his wife's family, I was entitled to his protection. He accordingly returned home, fully determined to interpose in the affair, and avenge the ill-treatment I had received.

A lady of my cousin's acquaintance being in the chaise with us, her presence prevented any disagreeable altercation during our return. I own I was not without my apprehensions of having some displeasing interrogatories put to me by Mrs. Clarke; but as she always appeared to be of a *dove-like* disposition, I had no idea that she possessed the qualifications of a Xantippe, in the degree I afterwards found she did. I had been told that she was naturally of a jealous temper; but as she and Mr. Clarke were both arrived at an age, when the heighday of the blood is supposed to be over, I doubted not but that passion had long since been eradicated from her bosom.

As she stepped out of the chaise, she hurt her foot; observing this, I offered her my hand to assist her in getting into the parlour. But upon my presenting it to her, she rejected it with the dignity of a Tragedy Queen; uttering at the same time, with a haughty accent, the word "Avaunt." Supposing the latter might be intended for the dog who ran to welcome his mistress home,
I took

I took no notice of it. But I was soon undeceived in this conjecture. For we had no sooner got into the house, than looking stedfastly in my face, she addressed me in a manner, and in a language that I had not been accustomed to, "Avaunt!" said she; "Thou art a child of iniquity—Thou hast sold thyself to the impure one—Thou art an impostress."——Here I stopped her short. Duplicity was a charge which I could not hear urged against me, without endeavouring to exonerate myself from the imputation. I therefore asked her in what I had *imposed* upon her? and challenged her to prove that in any of the conversations I had held with her, I had been guilty of a falsehood. As my cousin really regarded me next to her husband, she now appeared sorry for what she had uttered, and was about to make an apology; but unfortunately, at that crisis, Mr. Clarke came in,

He had no sooner informed her of the whole of what he had heard relative to me, and made known to her the resolution he had formed in consequence of it, than her rage in an instant rekindled; and instead of the dove, she once more resembled a Medusa. "Avaunt!" she again cried, "avaunt! Perdition will follow thee. Thou comest with all thy frauds to seduce my best beloved. Satan hath got hold of thee, as well as thy parent. Therefore, I pray thee,

“thee, leave my mansion.” Here her beloved interposed, declaring, “That nothing should prevent his going to the great city, to make the *bad man* do me justice, by taking me for his spouse.” “Didst thou not tell me, John,” interrupted Mrs. Clarke, “didst thou not tell me, that the wicked man had an helpmate?” This was a part of the story that my cousin John, through his inebriety, had forgotten. The observation, therefore, made by his wife, at once put a stop to his intended Quixotism.

Finding here, from the silence which ensued, an opportunity to speak, I told my cousin, that after what had just passed, I could not think of spending another day under her roof. Not that I was offended at her accusing me of an intention to seduce the conjugal fidelity of her beloved spouse, the insinuation being too laughable to give me a moment’s uneasiness; but upon account of her reflection on my dear mother, whose name I would not hear mentioned with disrespect. That, conscious of my own innocence, I readily forgave her for every crime she had accused me of, except that of deception, which made too deep an impression on my heart to be forgiven. Then assuming a very solemn air, in order, if possible, to make her repent of her illiberality, I thus went on; “Madam, “I would have you to know, that I have “a soul above all art.”

The moment I had uttered these words, Mrs. Clarke, with a transition both of countenance and voice, that would have done honour to the most comic actress, thus put a stop to my vindication. "Anne! Anne!" said she, with the utmost placidity, "perhaps thou dost hold the faith of the Turks; who believe that women have no souls!" The archness of her look, and her inexpressible manner, whilst she repeated this, made me drop the consequential air I had assumed, and put an end to my anger. And I could not refrain from bursting out into an immoderate fit of laughter. Thus terminated our conversation, and we now parted, to retire to rest. At our separation, Mrs. Clarke shook my hand three times, and took her leave for the night, *with wishing me every good thing*; the salutation usually made use of by Quakers to their very best friends. But, notwithstanding this proof of returning regard in the bosom of my lately exasperated cousin, I determined never to risk such another humiliating scene.

What a quantity I have written! My aching head and fingers have long since hinted to me, that it was time to finish this letter; but I was unwilling to do so, till I had ended the account of my sojourning with my Quaker relations. Having now done this, I shall conclude, with wishing thee, agreeable
to

to my cousin's expressive and charitable benediction, *plenty of good things.*

G. A. B.

LETTER XV.

Feb. 8, 17—.

I AROSE early the next morning, with an intention of going to Ingatestone, at which place lived a young lady, who during a visit at my cousin's, had favoured me with a pressing invitation to spend some time with her. Both my relations made use of their utmost persuasions to prevail upon me to stay with them longer; but when they found me resolute, they permitted me to go. Mrs. Clarke, however, insisted upon my accepting some presents. Among these was "Barclay's Apology," which some years after proved of the most essential service to me. I left Clarke-Hall about nine o'clock in my cousin's chaise, and upon my arrival at Ingatestone, found, to my great disappointment, that Miss White, which was the young lady's name, and all her family, were gone to London, to be present at the yearly meeting of their sect. Upon this I ordered the servant to drive to the best inn; after which I discharged him, and sent him home.

Whilst my dinner was getting ready, I sauntered to the end of the town; and being

struck with the prospect that appeared before me, I ascended a hill at some distance, in order to have the more extensive view. It is not in the power of language to do justice to the picture which here presented itself, although but an inland country. At the bottom of the hill on which I stood, there was a farm-house, surrounded with fields, that spoke the industry, as well as opulence of the owner; for I have observed that small farms, occupied by indigent people, are seldom kept in that order and neatness which large ones are.

After gratifying my sight with this rural scene for some time, I thought it proper to return. Before I had got far, I observed something gliding towards me which appeared to be shining; and what should it be but a serpent, which my fear magnified to an enormous size. I ran to avoid it, and in my fright leaped over a stile; which I had no sooner done, than a boy, who stood near it, desired I would not proceed, as there was a very vicious bull in the adjacent pasture. Thus situated between Scylla and Charybdis, I knew not which to run the risk of, the beast or the reptile. But the boy assuring me the serpent should not hurt me, as he had a good stick, and would defend me from it, I chose the lesser evil of the two, and was escorted by my rustic champion over the next field. My knight, however, had not
so

so much of the true spirit of chivalry in him, as to refuse a gratification for his services; and he returned as well pleased with a sixpence I bestowed upon him, as ever knight-errant did with a scarf received from the hands of his fair mistress at a tournament, or the thanks of a distressed damsel whom he had released from the hands of her ravisher.

As I walked the remainder of the way towards the town, the thought being probably inspired by the sight of the serpent, I could not help imagining my situation similar to that of our first parent Eve, on her expulsion from paradise; wandering forlorn, without friends, or even a place of abode, and Providence alone my guide. Nay worse did I fancy my lot to be; as our great mother had a companion to cheer the tedious way, and partake of her future fortune; one who loved her so well, as voluntarily to forfeit his blissful state, to accompany her in her exile, and combat unknown evils. Whilst my side was left all unguarded.

My mind was so totally occupied with these gloomy thoughts, that I should have prolonged my walk till the declining sun had warned me to return, had I not been apprehensive of meeting more vicious bulls and venomous serpents. Urged, therefore, rather by fear than appetite, I re-entered the gate of the inn; and my landlady appearing to be a decent

woman, and very communicative, as I wished to seek out an eligible residence in the town or neighbourhood, I requested the pleasure of her company to dine with me.

During our dinner, she informed me that Lord Petre had a noble house and estate adjoining to that town; adding that his Lordship's family was one of the worthiest in the world, *although they were Roman-Catholics*. I could not help smiling at this reservation; which she observing, begged my pardon; saying, "I fear, Madam, you are one." I replied, "I am indeed an *unworthy* one." As I spoke, the starting tear glistened in my eye, at the recollection of my remissness in the duties of the religion I professed. I however smothered the upbraidings of my mind, and inquired who lived at the farmhouse which was so pleasantly situated at some distance from the town. She informed me that it belonged to a rich farmer, but they were *Papishes*. I then desired she would instruct me in the distinction between Roman-Catholics and Papishes, as she termed them. "Lord, Miss," answered she, "sure you know the difference between a Hind and a Lord?" At any other time, the woman's curious explanation would have afforded me some diversion; but at present my mind was too much engrossed by the wish to obtain admission into the farm I had seen,

seen, to take that notice of her supposed wish she expected me to do.

I then informed her, that as I had come to Ingatestone upon a visit to Miss White, and should be very much disappointed to return without having seen her, I should be greatly obliged to her, if she could prevail on the farmer to board and lodge me till that young lady came back from London. "That's impossible," returned my hostess, "for I find you are a Quaker instead of a Catholic." I assured her again that I was of that persuasion, and would soon convince the farmer's family that I was so. A messenger was now dispatched to make inquiry whether my proposal would be agreeable; with whom Mrs. Williams, the farmer's wife, returned; and the good woman being as much pleased with me as I was with her, we soon came to an agreement.

In the evening I went to my new place of abode; where the first person I saw was my little champion, who ran to salute me. I was then introduced to all the family, which consisted of the farmer, his wife, two sons, one of whom was a widower with two children, the other a bachelor, and several domestics. This was the state of the family I was now become a member of; a family of industry and true happiness. At night I was shown into a neat bed-chamber, which had been fitted up by the late Mrs. Williams, the

widower's wife, in a superior style to any other part of the house, for her own use, and which I found stored with books, I should not have expected to meet with in such a residence. This circumstance gave me infinite pleasure, as my passion for reading was rather increased than relaxed, by my being debarred that enjoyment at Clarke-Hall. Morning and evening, Mr. Williams read prayers to the whole family, not a cow-boy being excused from attending. At our meals a cheerfulness sat on every countenance, except that of the widower, who seemed to retain a decent sorrow for his late lost partner. Mrs. Williams appeared to pay greater attention to this son than to the other; not, as she said, from her having more affection for him, but because his situation had a claim which the other, who was unthinkingly happy, had not. My kind host gained admittance for me on Sundays and holidays, into Lord Petre's chapel. And in my present peaceful residence, partly owing to this circumstance, I felt a tranquillity which I had never enjoyed since my return from my ever-regretted convent.

From many instances in my letters, particularly from the whole of this, you see that I have attended to your injunctions of relating the minutest circumstances of my life. The minutiae, you say, lead to the elucidation of greater events. I have, therefore, though

though they may be considered as frivolous by the public, when they are laid before them, and sometimes may prove tedious to you, obeyed your commands, at the expence, perhaps, of my literary fame. Having made this observation, I will bid you, for the present, adieu!

G. A. B.

L E T T E R X V I .

Feb. 13, 17—.

DURING my stay at this retired abode, I often wrote to my mother, but never could obtain an answer. I was the more surprised at this, as Mr. Moore had informed my cousin Clarke, that it was generally believed that I was innocent of any acquiescence in my elopement. After having resided in this tranquil place for some weeks, I one evening took a walk to the field where the serpent had alarmed me, in order to enjoy once more the prospect that had then so delighted me. Upon this eminence there was a large tree, under the spreading boughs of which seats were placed for the accommodation of those who came to enjoy the view; and on one of these I placed myself. Having tired the eye, and satisfied the curiosity, I had recourse to a book which I had brought with me, to prolong my

indulgence on this sweet spot. The book which I had put in my pocket, happened to be "Mrs. Rowe's Letters from the Dead to the Living;" in which I read, till the subject had thrown a gloom over my mind. I arose to return home; when* presently I thought I saw my mother's apparition making towards me. Her figure was so remarkable, and so strongly was the impress of her beloved form imprinted on my memory, that I could not be deceived. I immediately conjectured that her silence had been occasioned by her death; and, heated as my imagination was, by the subject I had just been reading, concluded she was come to upbraid me with being the occasion of it. The supposition that I had been the fatal, though innocent, cause of her dissolution, so overwhelmed my spirits, that I fell senseless on the flowery carpet of nature. But what transports did I feel, to find myself, on my recovery, really clasped in her arms! It was she herself. "Happy, happy hour!" I cried, enraptured, "do I once more receive the endearments of a parent!" The voice of forgiveness could not have been more acceptable to me, had I really been culpable.

As soon as my perturbations at this unexpected happiness were a little subsided, I inquired of my mother, what had occasioned the alteration in her sentiments that I now experienced. She informed me that her relation,

relation, who had proved such an inveterate enemy to me, was lately dead; and that after her decease, they discovered that she had secreted every one of my letters, the whole being found among her papers. My mother acknowledged that my silence had greatly exasperated Mrs. Jackson and herself against me, but still she could not help severely reproaching herself at times, for discarding a young creature like me, without having been well assured of my guilt. Had she but reflected a moment, she said, upon the circumstances attending my elopement, she must have been convinced of my innocence; for if I had been accessory to it, I should have taken my little wardrobe and other necessities with me, as well as the profits arising from my benefits; which I had insisted on her keeping in her possession. Every circumstance now, she confessed, appeared in a different light, and pleaded as much in my behalf, as they had before, when viewed through a false medium, seemed to condemn me. "Being thus," continued my mother, "from the discovery of my relation's treacherous conduct, and the testimony of concurrent circumstances, perfectly convinced of your innocence, and having likewise now obtained your address, I hastened on the wings of maternal affection, to atone for my unkind and inconsiderate behaviour. Finding you from

E 6 " home.

“ home on my arrival at the farm, and Mrs. Williams pointing out the way you had taken, my impatience would not suffer me to wait your return.”

After thanking my mother again and again, for this renewal of her tenderness, and having given her a just and true account of every thing which had befallen me since last I saw her, I could not help blaming her for suspecting me, even for a moment, of deceit. Sincerity, I told her, I valued myself upon. She had been an inmate of my bosom from the first hour that knowledge had darted her beams on my infant mind. That she had blessed me through life with her loved society; and notwithstanding her friendship had often cost me dear, yet I trusted she would attend me to the grave.

Having thus eased our labouring hearts of the burthen which had sat heavy on both for so long a time, we walked towards the farm. As we went along, I thanked, in many a silent ejaculation, that Being who had brought about this pleasing revolution in my affairs; and that by such unexpected means. “ The ways of Heaven indeed,” said I, in a mental exclamation, “ are dark and intricate. “ Puzzled with mazes, and perplexed with errors, our understanding traces them in vain; nor sees with how much art the windings run, nor where the regular confusion ends.”

It

It was with concern I heard from my mother that my good friend Mrs. Jackson, who had been for some time a widow, had married again, very indiscretely, to an Irish gentleman of the law, by name Kelly; and that she was preparing to accompany him to Ireland. As my attachment to that lady was founded both on affection and gratitude, the intelligence I had just received imbittered in some degree my newly-revived happiness. But as my mother's tenderness was now as excessive, as her resentment had been vehement; this, joined to the natural vivacity of my disposition, soon restored my spirits to their usual hilarity.

My mother having brought me apparel suited to the season, vanity, which, notwithstanding all my mortifications, was still alive in my heart, impelled me to appear, the following Sunday, in a gayer dress than I had done since I had been here. It is true I had never lost sight of that plain neatness which I had adopted upon coming into the country; but the addition of some very fine laces given me by Mrs. Jackson, and the being accoutred, upon the whole, more fashionably, excited inquiries, which till now had never existed. Whilst I was the neat, simple, silent, inoffensive girl, I passed uncensured; and the good people with whom I resided shewed me every respect, and doated upon me. But when, encouraged by the stranger
who

who had come from London, I appeared the gay, sprightly, well-dressed fine lady, they viewed me with pity mixed with contempt. From the behaviour of these rustics may probably be acquired a surer criterion of the garb and demeanour that betokens simplicity of manners, and innocence of heart, than from all the scientific rules of philosophy, or the moral precepts of divines.

Had I duly profited by this incident, which I ought to have considered as a well-meant reproof, I should have been content with a humble line of life. But the happiness attendant on simplicity and innocence, was not to be my lot. Pride prompted me to believe, that it was my indispensable duty to support my parent in a genteeler style than her pension would admit of; and no other method presented itself for doing this, than returning to my theatrical profession. This consequently I concluded on.

I had no sooner formed the resolution of treading the stage once more, than the calm retreat I had lately been so fond of, grew irksome to me.—Rural walks, moss-grown seats, spreading trees, books, and contemplation, lost their charms.—The prospects I had so often viewed with rapture and delight, were no longer pleasing to my eye.—The stillness of a country life palled upon my imagination.—The wholesome viands, the nut-brown ale, the fresh-gathered fruits,
the

the hearty welcome, the cheerful gibe, and all the pleasures of a rustic table, were now distasteful to me.—I welcomed in idea, all the gay scenes into which I was about to enter, together with their inseparable concomitants, noise, riot, dissipation, folly, and pain.

G. A. B.

 L E T T E R. XVII.

Feb. 22, 17—.

TO the great satisfaction of the farmer's honest family, who now viewed both my mother and me with suspicious eyes, she in a few days set off for London, whither I was soon to follow her. Upon her getting to town, she was to procure me a lodging somewhere in the environs, and then to wait on Mr. Rich, to know whether he chose to engage me again. As she was going towards Covent-Garden for this purpose, she accidentally met Mr. Sheridan; who having commenced manager of a theatre in Dublin, was come to England to raise recruits. That gentleman immediately inquired for me, expressing at the same time a desire to engage me. My mother replied, that she did not think it prudent to listen to any proposal,
till

till she had first obtained the consent of Mr. Rich, to whom her daughter lay under the greatest obligations. Mr. Sheridan acquiescing in this, my mother promised to acquaint him with the result of her interview with Mr. Rich.

My mother had no sooner mentioned her accidental meeting with Mr. Sheridan, and his wish to engage me, than Mr. Rich gave her, without the least hesitation, at once a proof of his regard and his disinterestedness. He advised her by all means to accept the proposal; as I should not only receive the instructions of so great a master, but have an opportunity of appearing in every principal character, an advantage I could not be indulged with on a London stage; the possession of parts at that time (except when permitted novices for a trial of their theatrical skill) being considered as much the *property* of performers, as their weekly salary.

Upon my arrival in town, a letter was delivered me at the inn from my mother, wherein she informed me that she had taken a lodging for me at Chelsea; to which I drove. I found Mr. Sheridan there, and my engagement with him was soon concluded. Having but a short time allowed me to make the necessary preparations, and being as much ashamed to appear before any person I knew, as if the scandal propagated against me had been well founded, I left
London

London without taking leave of any one. My heart indeed upbraided me with want of politeness, and with the highest degree of ingratitude, in not paying my respects, before I went, to Mr. Rich and to Mr. Quin, gentlemen to whom I lay under such great and numerous obligations; but I could not so far overcome my bashful timidity, as to do it.

In my agreement with Mr. Sheridan, I only stipulated for one character, which I was apprehensive my youth might be an objection to, and which it is here necessary to mention, as it was afterwards productive of disagreeable consequences. It was the part of Constance in "King John." A character which (although it might be objected to my playing it, that I was not only incapacitated from my want of experience on the stage, but from my figure, which would have been more properly adapted to the lady's son, Prince Arthur) I had set my heart upon.

Besides myself and my mother, who had conditioned to attend me, there were several other persons whom the Irish manager had engaged, and agreed to frank, as well as us, to Dublin. We set off with that gentleman from his lodgings, and nothing worth relating happened till we arrived at Parkgate. When we got there, the wind being contrary, Mr. Sheridan took his leave of us, and committing the management of the troop

troop to my mother, set off directly for Holyhead.

I have often thought there was a great similarity between the little troop we mustered here, and the company of itinerant players described with such infinite humour by Scarron. It consisted of Mrs. Elmy; a young adventurer named Lacy; an humble admirer of that lady, a Mr. Morgan, in the last stage of a consumption; my mother; myself; and (before he left us) the manager. After the latter had quitted us, my mother and Mrs. Elmy, who was a humourist and possessed of great good sense, but by her want of powers, was prevented from making a conspicuous figure upon the stage, were ever disputing about something or other. The contrast between the deportment and disposition of the two, was equal to the extremes of light and shade. To an indifferent observer, the formality and reserve of my honoured parent, compared with the levity and assumed low humour of Mrs. Elmy (both assumed sometimes through contradiction) afforded a truly laughable scene.

Of this I must give you the following instance. During our journey, we had passed through a place in Staffordshire, named Evisee-Bank, with the name of which Mrs. Elmy was so enchanted, that to gratify her whim, she was immediately nominated Countess of

Evisee

Evisée by your humble servant. The creation of this new dignity was the means of frequently putting my mother out of humour. For in all the inns we put up at, the newly-created countess had the best apartment, and more respect and attendance were shown her, than the rest of the company. Upon observing this constantly repeated, my mother told me, that if I did not immediately *undignify* her ladyship, she would leave her companions, and pursue the journey with only my divinityship. I was therefore obliged, when we arrived at Parkgate, to take the lady's title from her, and reduce her once more to plain Mrs. Elmy.

Having waited several days at Parkgate, without a probability of sailing, and the place being rendered more disagreeable than it is, by the houses being crowded with passengers; Mrs. Elmy prevailed upon me to endeavour to persuade my mother to go to the Head. I was to urge as a reason, that our stay at Parkgate would in all probability prove much more expensive than the journey. A wish to oblige Mrs. Elmy, together with curiosity to see this part of Wales, induced me to exert all my power over my mother upon the occasion. I at length, though not without great difficulty, succeeded; and she sent to hire horses and a guide, to set off the next morning.

Shall I conclude this letter here, before we set off, Madam, or shall I entertain you
first

first with the diverting history of our excursion over the Welsh mountains? As I have an hour to spare from any necessary avocation, as my head is tolerably clear, and as my fingers are untired, I will proceed; as methinks I hear you bid me.

Know then, that the next morning our little company set out on their intended journey for Holyhead, as I informed you it was agreed to do. As I never had been on horseback before, I was not sensible of the task I had undertaken. But the horses in this part of the world are so gentle, and so accustomed to the road, that there is little danger of any inconvenience arising, but that of fatigue.

After travelling that day without any accident, the next morning, at breakfast, we were joined by a party of Irish gentlemen, with whom we had dined when we were at Chester, and who were pursuing the same route as ourselves. We were very happy in the encounter, as their party greatly enlivened ours. One of these gentlemen, whose name was Crump, and of whom I shall have occasion to make frequent mention in the course of my narrative, paid so much assiduous attention to my mother, that we all concluded she had made a conquest of him. It will be necessary to remark, that my mother being perfectly recovered from that dejection which her anxiety for me had occasioned, and possessing still some remains of that beauty which had once captivated one of the most conspicuous characters in this kingdom,

dom, the supposition was not an improbable one. Her Hibernian admirer was about fifty years of age, hard favoured, but very lively, obliging, and intelligent. He was by profession a linen-merchant, and was upon his return from Chester fair, which he constantly attended twice a year.

We had exceeding fine weather till we came to Penmanmawr, when, just as we were ascending that stupendous rock, the horizon became of a sudden overcast; the big clouds, clad in their deepest sable, rolled over us, and spouted forth such cataracts of rain, as seemed to forebode a second deluge; the moon, which was not as yet hid, just served to give us a view, by its glimmering light, of the dreadful abyss that lay below; the peals of thunder, which were almost without intermission, threatened to burst the heavens; whilst the forked flashes of lightning seemed to denounce our immediate dissolution, and reminded me of good old Lear's exclamation:

“ ——— Tremble thou wretch,
“ That hast within thee undivulged crimes
“ Unwhipt of justice.”

In this awful and tremendous situation, Mrs. Elmy fell from her horse; and as the road at this time was too narrow to admit two horses abreast, her fall impeded the progress of the whole company, except that
of

of my mother, who with the guide led the van. Some of the gentlemen instantly dismounted, in order to place the disastrous heroine upon her palfrey; when, to their great surprise, as well as ours, she would not suffer herself to be moved from the ground, till she had repeated the following lines from Jane Shore:*

“ Fall then, ye mountains, on my guilty
“ head;

“ Hide me, ye rocks, within your secret
“ caverns;

“ Cast your black veil upon my shame,
“ O night!

“ And shield me with your sable wings
“ for ever.”

This piece of presumptuous humour failed of its desired effect; not one of the company seeming to be pleased with it but herself. Indeed it was very ill-timed. So much so was it, that one of the gentlemen who had joined us, and who professed himself a Free-thinker, but was really, as his own words evince, an Atheist, declared, with a great oath, that the lady was much to blame to *spout tragedy*, when the *spouts of heaven* were let loose upon us. To which he added, that such an awful scene as now presented itself, almost persuaded him there was a *Deity*. The horror Mrs. Elmy's ludicrous behaviour in such

* Act V. Scene last.

an alarming situation had excited in my mind, was not lessened by this declaration of our fellow-traveller. They both, united, seemed more dreadful than the tempest in which we were involved; as I was apprehensive, that Divine vengeance would await us for being in such company.

When the lady condescended to rise, she found that she had cut her foot against a stone by the fall, and she complained much of the pain it occasioned; for which reason she stopped at a cottage at the foot of the Mawr, to bathe it with brandy. Though drenched with rain, I would have continued with her, had not my mother insisted on my going on. Indeed, this was not a time to stand on compliments. My mother was apprehensive, as I had only a fustian riding-habit on (the season of the year, and the general serenity of the weather, having prevented me from providing myself with a great coat) that I should get cold, by which my voice might have been affected. This consideration induced her to consent to Mr. Crump's solicitations of taking me behind him.

As soon as I was seated, that gentleman put spurs to his horse, which was a hunter, and away we flew till we arrived at Bangor-Ferry. Here a figure presented itself, so exactly answering the description of Charon, that I imagined myself on the banks of the Styx. As the torrents which had fallen from the
rocks,

rocks, during the tempest, had swollen the river to an uncommon height, this had given the water a black tinge; and that being a quality, as we are told, of the river which leads to Tartarus and Elysium, it added to the imaginary deception.

Having crossed the ferry, Mr. Crump and myself arrived at Bangor some time before the rest of the company; where the mistress of the inn accommodated me with even a shift and stockings. In all the countries through which I ever travelled, I never met with such civil people as at the Welch inns. There is a cordiality in their manners, which must give a susceptible mind the greatest pleasure. Uncontaminated with the self-interested attention of those who belong to more frequented inns, where every civility must be purchased, they cheerfully supply you with every accommodation in their power, and are happy in obliging.

As soon as I was apparelled in my linsley-woolsey, which I assure you I found very comfortable, I joined my fellow-traveller, Mr. Crump, to return him thanks for the care and civility he had shewn me. He had prepared a good fire in the parlour against my return, which was evidently done to have an opportunity of getting me alone. His anxiety to do this must have been apparent to every one but myself. Had I observed it, I should have thought him guilty of an

an unpardonable presumption. For a man of his years, and without one personal attraction, to presume to look to my *divinityship*, was a supposition that I could form no idea of. I could not, however, help remarking, that my companion, who had hitherto been very loquacious, was now altogether as silent. As I was much fatigued, and not very well able to keep up a conversation, I was not displeased at his taciturnity.

After prancing about the room for some time, he approached me, and with a deep-fetched sigh, which would have blown the boat, we had lately entered, over the river, without the assistance of the ferry-man, took hold of my hand. I perceived that he was much agitated, a circumstance which, though it might have been agreeable in a favoured lover, was very unbecoming in a person with whom I had been so newly acquainted. At length he summoned up resolution enough thus to address me: "My dear Miss Bellamy," said he, "answer me one question: Were you ever in love?" My surprise at having such an interrogation put to me, and that in so abrupt a manner, prevented me from making an immediate reply; but recollecting myself, I answered, "Oh! yes, violently." "Are you really attached?" said he. "For ever," returned I. "It would perhaps be deemed impertinent," continued the gentleman, "were I to presume to ask with whom?"

"whom?" I told him, I did not think it could be of any consequence to him; but if it was, I would gratify his curiosity, by informing him it was—*with myself*. That I was a female Narcissus, and should always continue so. He had just time to exclaim, "Then I am satisfied," when our company appeared.

Such objects were they all as surpassed description. My mother had prudently provided herself with a good furtout; and the guide having some linen and other necessaries of hers safely stowed in a *saque de nuit*, which I had brought with me from France, she was soon equipt. But as for poor Mrs. Elmy, she came badly off; as I had already secured every unemployed article belonging to the good hostess's wardrobe. And what was more unfortunate for her than this, was, that there was no bed for her in the whole house, but one which could only be termed a crib, and that was placed in a closet of the room where we were to repose our weary limbs; and it was with great reluctance, that my mother consented to her being stowed even in that confined space. The gentlemen were obliged to sit up. At five o'clock, when the post-boy arrived, we were called, and pursued our journey.

We arrived at Holyhead just in time to save our passage; for the packet sailed in less than half an hour after we got in. For my own part, I was so much fatigued with the journey, that as soon as I got on board, I

retired to my cabin, where Morpheus was so kind as to touch me with his leaden wand, which caused me to sleep, till I heard the cry of "The Hill of Howth!"

My arrival in another kingdom will surely claim a separate letter; I shall therefore here put an end to this.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R X V I I I .

March 1, 17—.

UPON our arrival at Dublin, my mother and myself were very kindly received by an old intimate of hers, the lady of the well known Doctor Walker. This gentleman, at that time, was esteemed so eminent in his profession, that he was accumulating by his practice a capital fortune, notwithstanding he lived in a very genteel style. The Doctor was then writing a treatise against the Irish custom of burying their dead within a few hours after their decease. He endeavoured therein to dissuade the Hibernians from pursuing so hazardous a mode, as by interring bodies before any symptoms of putrefaction appeared, it did not unfrequently happen, that those who might have recovered their vital powers were prevented from doing so. When my mother heard on

what subject the Doctor was writing, she related to him the story of Mrs. Godfrey, which I recited in my first letter. As soon as she had concluded it, to shew the Doctor how consonant her opinion on this point was to his own, she promised him, that if she was in the same kingdom with him when the king of terrors made his approach, she would carefully attend to the state of his corpse, and take care that it should not be entombed whilst there was the least probability of its restoration to life.

I insert all the circumstances of the foregoing conversation in so particular a manner, as an admonition to others; never to make a promise they do not intend to perform. Punctuality in the performance of a promise is as obligatory to an honest mind as the payment of a debt. Yet how many do we see profuse in the former, lightly making promises which they never pay the least attention to afterwards, who would censure in the severest manner the non-payment of a pecuniary obligation! Though I have been too often obliged, through inability, to defer the accomplishment of many engagements, the involuntary neglect has lain more heavily on my mind, than any necessities I may have experienced from the same cause.

We continued at Doctor Walker's house, till we could find one which suited us; and this we soon after did, contiguous to the theatre.

theatre. Mrs. Walker would gladly have detained us, but my mother objected to it on many accounts; particularly because their house was always crowded with company.

As soon as I was recovered from the fatigue of my journey, I went to pay my respects to Mrs. O'Hara, Lord Tyrawley's sister, who had not seen me since I was an infant. To my great grief I found her blind. She was much pleased with my visits, but she did not greatly approve of the profession I had chosen. However, as I went by the name of my mother's husband, to which alone I had a right, being born after their marriage, my engagement in the theatrical line could not bring *public* disgrace on her family. She, notwithstanding, proposed herself to introduce me to all her acquaintance as *her niece*; which she accordingly did, as the acknowledged daughter of Lord Tyrawley.

I received extreme pain from a piece of information Mrs. O'Hara gave me; which was relative to the death of my good friend, the protectress of my early years, Mrs. Pye, for whom she was then in second-mourning. I never regretted any thing so much as being absent from this lady during her illness. I fondly thought, that the unremitted care and affectionate attention of one she loved as her own child, and who looked upon her as a parent, would have prolonged her desirable life; a life truly valuable to her husband, and

all those who had the happiness to be of her acquaintance.

Mrs. O'Hara kindly inquired into the state of my finances, which gave me an opportunity of making her acquainted with the Dutchess of Queensberry's liberality to me, and likewise with the mortification I had received from her grace at the same time; with which she seemed much entertained. I even informed her of the event which had been the cause of so much unhappiness to me. It is an established maxim with me, never to rest satisfied with gaining the good opinion of any person by halves. In endeavouring to acquire a friend, it is necessary to let them into the whole of your situation; otherwise you conduct yourself with the same absurdity as if, while you consulted a physician, you concealed the symptoms or nature of your disorder from him. Where a disclosure of secrets becomes needful, an open implicit confidence is required; otherwise the chance of success is greatly against you.

In the afternoon the honourable Mrs. Butler and her daughter were announced. Mrs. O'Hara introduced me as her niece, and added an eulogium which I by no means merited; and as this lady was a leading woman in the fashionable world, had great interest, and her house was frequented by most of the nobility, Mrs. O'Hara solicited her protection for me.

Mrs.

Mrs. Butler was elegant in her figure, and had been very pretty, of which there were still some remains; but the decay of her beauty appeared to be more the result of indisposition than age. Her daughter was handsome, spirited, sensible, and good humoured. She was nearly of the same age with myself, and seemed, even at this first interview, to have contracted a partiality for me, which I reciprocally wished to cultivate. Before the ladies took their leave, they engaged my aunt and me to come the next day to Stephen's-Green to dine and spend the evening. I promised them with the greatest readiness to do myself that honour, and my dear aunt agreed to accompany me. As Mrs. O'Hara was an invalid, and as she knew she must trespass the next evening on her usual regularity, Mrs. Butler keeping late hours, I left her early to her repose.

When I returned home, I found our fellow-traveller, Mr. Crump, *tete-a-tete* with my mother. She informed me that Miss St. Leger, one of the three ladies I had become acquainted with some years before at Mrs. Jones's, had called and requested to see me the next morning, at Lady Doneraile's, in Dawson-Street. Thus from having no female acquaintance in London, except my own family, I was now *en train* to be introduced into the first circle in Dublin. As I was not a little

elated at the reception I had met with from Mrs. O'Hara, I told my mother, laughing, that she must divest herself of her formality, which perhaps might induce Mr. Crump, as they seemed to have so good an opinion of each other, to bestow all his leisure hours upon her; for there appeared to be very little probability of her having much of my company; the time required by the duties of my profession, and the engagements I was likely to be honoured with, promising to engage the whole of it. At parting he promised to comply with the proposal I had made. But my mother was much displeased with me for having taken such an unallowable freedom with her. I have before observed that she retained all the formality of Quakerism, notwithstanding she had renounced the religious tenets of that people.

The next morning I went to breakfast with Miss St. Leger, by whom I was received with all that politeness she so eminently possessed, actuated by the cordial warmth usually felt by the susceptible, on embracing a loved intimate after a long absence. She inquired in the kindest manner after Miss Conway; and was much affected at hearing that her friend was in a declining state of health, occasioned by her constant attendance on the Princess of Wales, to whom

whom she was a Maid of Honour, which prevented her from taking the necessary steps for her recovery. She pressed me to stay dinner, but when I informed her that I was pre-engaged, and told her by whom, she politely said she was then happy, even in being deprived of my company; as the acquaintance of Mrs. Butler was the most desirable of any in Dublin, and would prove most agreeable and beneficial to me. She at the same time much regretted that she was deprived of the pleasure of frequenting that lady's house, which was occasioned by some umbrage her aunt, Lady Doneraile, with whom she resided, had given her.

My reception at the Green, when I went to dinner, was of the most flattering kind. It exceeded even my warmest hopes; and Mrs. Butler avowed herself my patroness, notwithstanding she had not yet had an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge, whether I really deserved that honour. When I took leave, she obligingly requested, that I would pass every hour, not appropriated to the business of the theatre, at her house; which you may be assured I did not fail readily to promise.

As I fix, which you must already have observed, on the most remarkable periods of my life for the introduction of my letters, in imitation of the division of their chapters by chronologers! and as I am now about to enter

on the beginning of my theatrical existence on the Dublin stage, I shall here conclude.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R X I X .

March 12, 17—.

THE theatre opened with eclat—But hold, I must first give way to an impulse I cannot resist, and write an exordium to this letter, in which several *great men in their professional line* are to make their appearance. Though apparently digressive from my history, yet it may perhaps tend to further the purpose of it, which is to mingle instruction with amusement.—It is by industry and application alone a person can arrive at eminence in any profession. Though natural genius is the most essential quality towards the attainment of every art or science, yet genius unassisted by cultivation can never reach perfection. Intense study and close application are absolutely needful (save in a few instances) to form the *truly great*; and if the private life of all the great men who have rendered themselves famous in any branch of knowledge, were to pass in review before us, we should find that *these* have not been wanting towards the acquisition of their fame. The following beautiful lines of the inimitable Spenser convey

vey this document with irresistible force, and should be always imprinted on the mind of every son and daughter of genius.

“ Abroad in arms, at home in studious kind,

“ Who seeks with painful toil, shall *honour* soonest find.

“ In woods, in waves, in wars, she's wont to dwell,

“ And will be found with peril and with pain,

“ Nor can the man that moulds in idle cell,

“ Unto her happy mansion e'er attain.

“ Before her gate High God did sweat ordain,

“ And wakeful watches ever to abide :

“ But easy is the way, and passage plain,

“ To *pleasure's* palace; it may soon be spy'd,

“ And day and night her doors to all stand open wide.”

I shall only add (not that I mean to rate myself among the *great*) that what merit I acquired as an actress, although I found time to keep up an acquaintance in the genteel circle just mentioned, was not acquired without close application.

But to proceed—The theatre opened with eclat. And what was very fortunate for me,

the Earl of Chesterfield was at that time Viceroy. Mr. Barry had made some figure on this stage the preceding winter, in the character of Othello; and upon my being engaged, the manager wrote to him to study that of Castalio, as he proposed that I should early appear in the Orphan. To add to our success, Mr. Garrick joined the company this season. Having some dispute with the proprietor of Drury-Lane-Theatre, and Mr. Rich declining to give him the terms he required, he came to Dublin. Three such capital performers as Garrick, Sheridan, and Barry, in one company, was a circumstance that had scarcely ever happened.

The two first, Mr. Garrick and Mr. Sheridan, agreed to play Shakespear's characters alternately, and to unite their strength in every performance. In the "Orphan," Garrick performed Chamont; Barry, Castalio; and Sheridan, Polydore. In the "Fair Penitent," Sheridan played Horatio; Garrick, Lothario; and Barry, Altamont. The latter character was played so capitally by Mr. Barry, that this part seemed as consequential as either of the others. I was obliged to appear almost every night; and sometimes in characters very unfit for me. The great applause that I received, however, spurred me on, and excited in me the strongest endeavours to deserve it. And that I might at once pay a proper attention to the duties

duties of my profession, and have time to enjoy the society of my new friends, I scarcely allowed myself even that portion of rest which nature requires. A good constitution, however, and inexhaustible spirits, enabled me to go through the season.

After some time, the tragedy of "King John" was proposed, wherein Roscius and the manager were to appear together, and play alternately the King and the Bastard. Upon this occasion Mr. Sheridan insisted on my playing Constance; whilst Mr. Garrick objected to it as there would then be no person to play Prince Arthur, but the late Mrs. Kennedy, at that time Miss Orpheur, who was nearly of the same age as myself, and from being hard-favoured, looked much older.

Upon Mr. Garrick's absolute rejection of my appearance in the character on which I had set my heart, and for the performance of which I had stipulated in my articles, I flew to my patroness Mrs. Butler, to complain of the breach of them. Notwithstanding her partiality for Mr. Garrick, so highly did I stand in her favour, that she immediately sent round to all her friends, to request they would not go to the play the evening it was performed. Besides the consequence of family and fortune, this lady possessed very great power in the genteel world. To this may be added, that as she frequently

frequently gave balls, all the young ladies that were usually invited, were always ready to oblige her in any request of this nature, to insure themselves a place at those entertainments. And every one of these readily obeyed, and spread abroad her injunctions. The house on the night "King John" was performed for the first time was, of course, very thin. The receipts did not amount to forty pounds.

This was the first theatrical humiliation the immortal Roscius ever met with; and he severely repented preferring Mrs. Furnival, who played the character of Constance, to my little self. But what completed my triumph was, that when the same play was again performed, and Mr. Sheridan played the King; Garrick, the Bastard; and myself Constance, more people were turned away than could get places; and the dispute relative to the characters which had lately happened, made the audience receive me with the warmest marks of approbation.

But notwithstanding this success, I was determined to return the mortification Mr. Garrick had been the cause of to me, the very first opportunity that presented itself; and it was not long before one offered. This LITTLE great man was to have two benefits during the season; and that they might not come too near each other, it was agreed that he should have one of them early in it. He
had

had fixed on "Jane Shore," for his first benefit. And on application being made to me to perform that character, I absolutely refused it, alleging the objection he had made to my playing Constance, namely my youth. Finding that entreaties were ineffectual, he prevailed on Mrs. Butler to make use of her interest with me; sensible that I could not refuse the solicitations of a lady to whom I was bound not only by the ties of gratitude, but those of policy. And whilst he made this application, that he might leave no method of obtaining my consent untried, he wrote me a note at the same time, which occasioned the following laughable incident, and furnished conversation for the whole city of Dublin.

In his note he informed me, "that if I
" would oblige him, he would write me a
" *goody goody* epilogue; which, with the help
" of my eyes, should do more mischief than
" ever the flesh or the devil had done since
" the world began." This ridiculous epistle
he directed "To my soul's idol, the beauti-
" fied Ophelia;" and delivered it to his ser-
vant, with orders to bring it to me. But the
fellow having some more agreeable amusement
to pursue than going on his master's errands,
he gave it to a porter in the street, without
having attended to the curious direction that
was on it. The porter, upon reading the
superscription, and not knowing throughout
the

the whole city of Dublin, any lady of quality, who bore the title either of "My Soul's Idol," or "The beautified Ophelia," naturally concluded that it was intended to answer some jocular purpose. He accordingly carried it to his master, who happened to be a newsman; and by his means it got the next day into the public prints. The inditer of this high-flown epistle, it must be supposed, was not a little mortified at its publication. Nor was my mother, who was always awake for my reputation, without her alarms, lest it should injure my character; but that, thank Heaven, was too well established, to be endangered by so ridiculous an accident.

"No man is wise at all hours," says the proverb. And never was this adage more completely verified than in the foregoing anecdote. That such *silly goody goody* stuff, as his epistle contained, should ever fall from the *immortal* pen of the *immortal* Roscius, even in the most careless and relaxed moment, "was strange, was passing strange." Fortune seems to have taken advantage of the writer's momentary imbecillity, and at once to correct him for it, and to caution him against the indulgence of such trivial affected humour—such an apology for wit—in future, contrived matters so that it should be made public.

With

With such a company, it must reasonably be supposed, that the season turned out very lucrative to Mr. Garrick and to Mr. Sheridan. What the emoluments of Roscius were, I do not recollect, but it was reported that they were almost incredible.

After a reconciliation between Mr. Garrick and myself had been effected, he visited much oftener at Colonel Butler's than usual. The Colonel had a seat on the sea-coast, not many miles from Dublin; and my mother thinking that bathing in the sea would be of great benefit to my health, she took a furnished house at the sheds of Clontarf, for that purpose. She fixed on this spot, that I might at the same time be near my much loved companion, Miss Butler; between whom and myself, as inseparable a connection had taken place, as if it had been cemented by the ties of blood. To such an extravagant height was our regard for each other carried, that notwithstanding we usually met at dinner, and spent the remainder of the day together, I had generally an epistle or two before that hour arrived. — Sweet is the union which exists between two young persons of the same sex, and of delicate and susceptible minds at our time of life. Unembittered by the turbulent desires and anxious cares of love, all is joy, delight, and pleasing expectation. The way is strewn with flowers, and not a thistle rears its head to wound the lightly-tripping foot.

At

At the conclusion of the season, Mr. Garrick prepared to return to England, with the rich harvest that had crowned his toils. Mrs. Butler, who had a taste for wit, was as fond of his company, as her amiable daughter was of mine. Indeed it was not without reason she was so; for I know very few whose company was to be courted in preference to Mr. Garrick's, when he endeavoured to please. The following whimsical manœuvre of Mrs. Butler's, will shew that her fancy was sometimes as sportive, and her satire as keen, as that of her witty guest.

Some days before Mr. Garrick's departure for England, as Mrs. Butler, her daughter, myself, and some other company, were walking on the terrace, we had the satisfaction to see the much-admired hero come galloping up to the house. He soon joined us; and to the great regret of us all, particularly of Mrs. Butler, announced his intention of leaving Dublin the next day. Whilst we were engaged in conversation, the lady of the house went away abruptly; but soon returned, bearing in her hand a sealed packet, which she delivered to Roscius, thus addressing him at the same time. "I
" here present you, Mr. Garrick, with
" something more valuable than life. In it
" you will read my sentiments; but I strictly
" enjoin you not to open it till you have
" passed

"passed the Hill of Howth." We all looked surprised at this extraordinary presentation, especially Colonel Butler's chaplain, who was one of the party. As the lady inclined somewhat to prudery, and had always appeared to be governed by the most rigid rules of virtue, we could none of us guess the purport of the present, though her conduct seemed to admit of a doubtful interpretation. But Garrick, who was as conscious of possessing nature's liberal gifts as any man breathing, took the packet with a significant graceful air; concluding, without hesitation, that it contained, not only a valuable present (the giver having the power, as well as the disposition, to be generous) but a declaration of such tender sentiments, as her virtue would not permit her to make known to him whilst he remained in the kingdom.

After dinner Mr. Garrick took his leave; and he was no sooner departed, than Mrs. Butler informed the company, that the contents of the valuable packet with which she had presented her visitor, were nothing more than "Wesley's Hymns," and "Dean Swift's Discourse on the Trinity;" adding, that he would have leisure during his voyage, to study the one, and to digest the other. You may be assured that we all enjoyed the joke. As for my own part, I could scarcely keep my risible faculties in any order, when my imagination presented to me Garrick's disappointment

pointment at finding the contents of the packet so very different from what he had concluded them to be. I must inform you, that at our next meeting, Mr. Garrick acquainted me, that upon opening the packet and seeing what it contained, he was so much chagrined, that instead of benefiting by the Christian precepts to be found therein, he, in the most Heathenish manner, offered them up a sacrifice to Neptune. In plain English, he threw both Mr. Wesley and the Dean, cheek-by-jole, into the sea.—A more heterogeneous union certainly never took place.

Permit me just to add, that the happy manner in which I spent my time in this terrestrial paradise, and with such agreeable company, so much increased the pace of the old gentleman with the scythe and looking-glass, that he tripped along through days, weeks, and months, as nimble as a dryad; and the summer passed imperceptibly away.

G. A. B.

LETTER XX.

March 18, 17—.

TO show my readiness to obey your commands, Madam (for the request of a friend is as obligatory as a command) I employ almost every hour on the continuation of my narrative; and shall esteem myself sufficiently

ficiently repaid, if I can prevent it from proving tiresome. You must remember that it is the history of a weak woman, recited by the same weak woman. Be, therefore, to her faults, whether relative to her conduct, or her literary ones, *a little blind*. But a truce with apologies. Such as it is, I give it unto you.

The next winter, when our theatrical campaign commenced, we were very apprehensive that we should feel the desertion of so able a general as Garrick. But through the exertions of the manager, who was deservedly a great favourite with the gentlemen of the college, at which he was bred, as the provost and professors had been his fellow-students, our success was not less than when we were aided by his powerful assistance—He who, *in himself alone*, was a tower of invincible strength.

A droll circumstance happened about this time, which I must not omit. Going one evening to Fishamble-Street concert, I happened to be seated next to Lord Chief Baron Bowes. A gentleman, who was lately come to Dublin, entering into conversation with his Lordship, remarked to him (at the same time fixing his eyes upon me) that his daughter was vastly like him. We were at this period reviving at the theatre, "The Merchant of Venice;" upon which it instantly occurred to me, to make particular observations on the manner of the person I was thus supposed to resemble, in order to adopt it in the part of Portia, which I was to play.

I accordingly

I accordingly did so; and succeeded so happily, that when I made my appearance as the counsellor, the audience, struck with the similitude, universally exclaimed "Here comes the young Lord Chief Baron." And I retained that title during my residence in the kingdom.

The Lord Chief Baron himself was so much pleased with the imitation, that he paid me many compliments upon the occasion. He humourously remarked that I had even got his cough in the middle of a long word. This indeed was true, but it proceeded entirely from accident; as I never had the pleasure of hearing his Lordship speak in any of the courts. I however, luckily hit off this peculiarity in repeating the word *predicament*. Was it not that I am apprehensive of incurring the imputation of vanity, I would give you the conclusion of his Lordship's complimentary address to me. I will therefore omit it; but guess something very flattering, and even then, I assure you, that you will fall far short of the purport of it.

Early in the season, the tragedy of "All for Love, or the World well Lost," was revived; in which Barry and Sheridan stood unrivalled in the characters of Antony and Ventidius. The getting it up produced the following extraordinary incidents. The manager, in an excursion he had made during the summer to London, had purchased a superb suit of clothes that had belonged to the Princess

cess of Wales, and had been only worn by her on the birth-day. This was made into a dress for me to play the character of Cleopatra; and as the ground of it was silver tissue, my mother thought that by turning the body of it in, it would be a no unbecoming addition to my waist, which was remarkably small. My maid-servant was accordingly sent to the theatre to assist the dresser and mantua-maker in preparing it; and also in sewing on a number of diamonds, my patroness not only having furnished me with her own, but borrowed several others of her acquaintance for me. When the women had finished the work, they all went out of the room, and left the door of it indifferently open.

Mrs. Furnival (who owed me a grudge, on account of my eclipsing her, as the more favourable reception I met with from the public, gave her room to conclude I did; and likewise for the stir which had been made last season about the character of Constance) accidentally passed by the door of my dressing-room in the way to her own, as it stood open. Seeing my rich dress thus lying exposed, and observing no person by to prevent her, she stepped in, and carried off the Queen of Egypt's paraphernalia, to adorn herself in the character of Octavia, the Roman matron, which she was to perform. By remarking from time to time my dress, which was very different from the generality of
of

of heroines, Mrs. Furnival had just acquired taste enough to despise the black velvet in which those ladies were usually habited. And without considering the impropriety of enrobing a Roman matron in the habiliments of the Egyptian Queen; or perhaps not knowing that there was any impropriety in it, she determined, for once in her lifetime, to be as fine as myself, and that at my expence. She accordingly set to work to let out the clothes, which, through my mother's œconomical advice, had been taken in.

When my servant returned to the room, and found the valuable dress, that had been committed to her charge, missing, her fright and agitation were beyond expression. She ran like a mad creature about the theatre, inquiring of every one whether they had seen any thing of it. At length she was informed that Mrs. Furnival had got possession of it. When running to that lady's dressing-room, she was nearly petrified at beholding the work, which had cost her so much pains, undone. My damsel's veins, unfortunately for Mrs. Furnival, were rich with the blood of the O'Bryens. And though she had not been blest with so polished an education as such a name was entitled to, she inherited at least the *spirit* of the Kings of Ulster. Thus qualified for carrying on an attack even of a more important nature, she at first demanded the dress with

with tolerable civility ; but meeting with a peremptory refusal, the blood of her great forefathers boiled within her veins, and without any more ado, she fell tooth and nail upon poor Mrs. Furnival. So violent was the assault, that had not assistance arrived in time to rescue her from the fangs of the enraged Hibernian nymph, my theatrical rival would probably have never had an opportunity of appearing once in her life adorned with *real* jewels.

When I came to the theatre, I found my servant dissolved in tears at the sad disaster ; for notwithstanding her heroic exertions, she had not been able to bring off the cause of the contest. But so far was I from partaking of her grief, that I could not help being highly diverted at the absurdity of the incident. Nothing concerning a theatre could at that time affect my temper. And I acknowledge I enjoyed a secret pleasure in the expectation of what the result would be. I sent indeed for the jewels ; but the lady, rendered courageous by Nantz, and the presence of her paramour, Morgan, who was not yet dead, she condescended to send me word, that I should have them after the play.

In this situation I had no other resource than to reverse the dresses, and appear as plain in the character of the luxurious Queen of Egypt, as Antony's good wife, although the sister of Cæsar, ought to have been. In the room of precious stones, with which my head

should have been decorated, I substituted pearls; and of all my finery I retained only my diadem, that indispensable mark of royalty.

Every transaction that takes place in the theatre, and every circumstance relative to it, are as well known in Dublin as they would be in a country town. The report of the richness and elegance of my dress had been universally the subject of conversation, for some time before the night of performance; when, to the surprise of the audience, I appeared in white satin. My kind patroness, who sat in the stage-box, seemed not to be able to account for such an unexpected circumstance. And not seeing me adorned with the jewels she had lent me, she naturally supposed I had reserved my regalia till the scene in which I was to meet my Antony.

When I had first entered the green-room, the manager, who expected to see me splendidly dressed, as it was natural to suppose the enchanting Cleopatra would have been upon such an occasion, expressed with some warmth his surprise at a disappointment, which he could only impute to caprice. Without being in the least discomposed by his warmth, I coolly told him, "that I had taken the advice Ventidius had sent me by Alexis, and had parted with both my clothes and jewels to Antony's wife." Mr. Sheridan could not conceive my meaning; but as it was now too late to make any alteration,

alteration, he said no more upon the subject. He was not however long at a loss for an explanation; for going to introduce Octavia to the Emperor, he discovered the jay in all her borrowed plumes. An apparition could not have more astonished him. He was so confounded, that it was some time before he could go on with his part. At the same instant Mrs. Butler exclaimed aloud, "Good Heaven, the woman has got on my diamonds!" The gentlemen in the pit concluding that Mrs. Butler had been robbed of them by Mrs. Furnival; and the general consternation, occasioned by so extraordinary a scene, is not to be described. But the house observing Mr. Sheridan to smile, they supposed there was some mystery in the affair, which induced them to wait with patience till the conclusion of the act. As soon as it was finished, they bestowed their applause upon Antony and his faithful veteran; but as if they had all been animated by the same mind, they cried out, "No more Furnival! No more Furnival!" The fine dressed lady, disappointed of the acclamations she expected to receive on account of the grandeur of her habiliments, and thus hooted for the impropriety of her conduct, very prudently called fits to her aid, which incapacitated her from appearing again. And the audience had the good nature to wait patiently till Mrs. Elmy, whom curiosity had led

to the theatre, had dressed to finish the part. Had the character of Octavia been originally cast according to merit, Mrs. Elmy would certainly have had the preference; as the softness of her manner, and the propriety with which she spoke, justly entitled her to it.

The impropriety of Mrs. Furnival's conduct in the affair, just related, warrants my troubling you with an observation I have frequently made, which is, that every attempt to obtain a desirable end, if the means are not consistent with honour and rectitude, mar instead of promoting it. If I recollect aright, I have made a remark somewhat similar to this in a former letter, but it cannot be too often repeated, "Honesty will be always found to be the best policy."—"More proverbs, and preaching again?" methinks I hear you say; "Pray go on with your narrative!"—I will, my dear Madam, when I have reminded you that it was by your permission I now and then preach, as you are pleased to term it.

With these interruptions the piece could not appear to so much advantage, on its first representation, as there was reason to hope it would. But the next night, either inspired with the brilliancy of my ornaments, or animated by the sight of his Excellency Lord Chesterfield, who together with his Lady, graced the theatre, it was the general opinion that I never played with so much spirit, or did greater justice to a part. The applause I received was universal.

A gentleman,

A gentleman, who stood near the stage-door, took a very unallowable method of shewing his approbation. Being a little flushed with liquor, or otherwise I am persuaded he would not have been capable of the rudeness, he put his lips to the back of my neck as I passed him. Justly enraged at so great an insult, and not considering that the Lord Lieutenant was present, or that it was committed before such a number of spectators, I instantly turned about, and gave the gentleman a slap in the face. Violent and unbecoming as this sudden token of resentment appeared, it received the approbation of Lord Chesterfield, who rose from his seat and applauded me for some time with his hands; the whole audience, as you may suppose, following his example. At the conclusion of the act, Major Macartney came, by order of his Excellency, to Mr. St. Leger (that was the gentleman's name) requesting that he would make a public apology for this forgetfulness of decorum; which he accordingly did. I have reason to believe that this incident contributed, in a great measure, to a reform that Mr. Sheridan, with great propriety, soon after made. Agreeable to this regulation, no gentlemen, in future, were to be admitted behind the scenes.

G. A. B.

March 25, 17—.

“**P**ROCEED, and indulge yourself in
 “any manner you please, whenever
 “fancy prompts you to wander from the
 “road of your history; for I read with in-
 “expressible pleasure every part of your
 “letters.”—Do you really write thus, my
 dear Madam? And does my humble attempt
 to afford you entertainment answer the in-
 tended purpose? It does, it does. You tell
 me so; and I know you are too sincere to
 flatter me. Thus encouraged, I *will* proceed.
 Nor shall one reluctant sigh at the length of the
 way which still lies before me, or a further fear
 of proving tiresome to you, escape me.

Notwithstanding the applause bestowed upon
 my theatrical talents by the people of Dublin,
 was an indubitable proof of my possessing no
 mean degree of merit, yet I was apprehensive
 (though naturally vain) that this was rather
 exaggerated by their partiality, and the support
 I received on account of my family from the
 higher ranks. I endeavoured therefore, by
intense application, as I have already told you,
 to render them more justly deserving of the
 public approbation.

Mr. Garrick having about this time pur-
 chased a half-share of the patent of Drury-
 Lane theatre, and my success in Dublin having
 reached his ears, he wished to engage me for
 the

the ensuing season. And Mr. Delany, an actor then of the first rate, being obliged to visit Ireland to take possession of an estate left him by his mother, Mr. Garrick deputed him to make me an offer of ten pounds a week. This offer however I refused; and I acknowledge my indiscretion in so doing. I must here just observe, that the applause I met with in comedy was equal, if not superior, to that which was bestowed upon me when I played in tragedy. And by playing the character of Biddy in "Miss in her Teens," I convinced the town, that I was no less qualified to perform in *low* than in *genteel* comedy.

I was about this time informed that Mr. Quin had been so displeased with me for my apparent ingratitude, that he had consented to be reconciled to Mrs. Cibber; and now bestowed that generous attention on her that I should otherwise have shared in. He had been greatly offended with that lady also, on account of her desertion from Covent-Garden theatre to Drury-Lane. She lay under as many obligations to him for *real* favours as I did for intentional ones; for she had not only been necessitated to accept of those of a pecuniary nature, but had been obliged to him for her re-establishment on the English stage, from which she had been precluded, for some time, by the machinations of her husband. Her ingratitude was, notwithstanding, now obliterated from Mr. Quin's mind, and he took her once more under his protection.

My refusal of Mr. Garrick's offer offended him so highly, that, it was said, he formed a resolution never to engage me upon any terms whatever. But the resolutions of managers are seldom considered as binding, when opposed by their interest. Self-interest, with them, as with the greatest part of mankind, is the grand moving principle. Pique, resentment, prejudice, in an instant dissolve before it. Even pride and arrogance bend submissive to it. It may therefore be truly said, however degrading the thought, to be *the ruling passion* of the human mind.

Just at this period an event happened, which, if it had been attended with the expected consequences, would have broken Mrs. O'Hara's heart, have greatly affected the mind of my patroness, and have ruined my reputation for ever. One night, as I was performing the part of Lady Townley in "The Provoked Husband," I received a card from Mrs. Butler, wrote in a servant's hand, requesting me to come to her house as soon as I should be at liberty. As the note was delivered to me during the performance of the play, I had only leisure just to send verbally, with my compliments, that the fatigue of the evening would prevent me from being able to do myself that honour.

Had I attended to the circumstance of the card's being written by a servant, I must have been convinced that something was wrong;

wrong; as my dear friend Miss Butler was always happy in seizing every occasion to write to me. It, however, passed unnoticed. Not long after, I received another note, informing me, that I must absolutely come the moment I had finished, and even without waiting to change my dress. So very pressing an invitation, I own excited my curiosity, and made me impatient for the conclusion of my business. I was to have played Miss Biddy in the entertainment; but the gentleman who was to have performed Fribble being suddenly taken ill, the after-piece was obliged to be changed; which enabled me to make my curtsy much sooner than I had reason to expect.

My task being done, I got into my chair in the same dress in which I had played the character of Lady Townley, and hastened away to Stephen's-Green. As the dress I wore was a modern one, there was no great impropriety in my appearing in it off the stage. Just as I entered one door of the parlour in which Mrs. Butler and her female visitors were, the Colonel, and several gentlemen, who had just risen from their bottle, were ushered in at the opposite one. The company was numerous; and the elegance of my dress attracted the attention of all the gentlemen; but not one of the ladies condescended to speak to me. Even the lady whose guest I was, only deigned to welcome

me, on my entrance, with a formal declination of her head.

A reception so different from what I had been accustomed to in that hospitable mansion, not only surprised, but greatly shocked me. In this agitation of mind, I made up to Mrs. O'Hara, who was present, and requested she would inform me what was the occasion of it. The answer I received from her was, that a few minutes would determine whether she should ever notice me again. The coolness of her manner, whilst she uttered this, as I was conscious of my innocence, and my aunt must have been well assured of the sincerity of my heart, piqued my pride for a moment; but this emotion soon went off, and I assumed, at least in appearance, my usual tranquillity.

A gentleman now made his *entrée*, whose figure, shape, dress, and address, exceeded every thing I had ever beheld before. The ladies, notwithstanding, continued to look as serious and demure as a convocation of old maids met on purpose to dissect the reputation of a giddy thoughtless young one. Nor did this beautiful stranger, with all his attractions, seem to be less neglected than myself. From being in such company, and in such a splendid dress, for my head was adorned with the jewels of my patroness, the gentleman might naturally conclude, that I was a person of quality. And as a young lady of distinction had lately taken an airing,
on

on a moonlight night, with a noble lord, he imagined, in all probability, from the reserve with which he saw me received by the ladies, that I was the very identical girl who had made that *faux pas*, and who had now *obtruded* herself into the first circle in the kingdom. What other opinion could he form of me from the present appearance of things!

From this motive, or some other, his attention appeared to be fixed upon me, in preference to any of the other ladies; and he introduced himself to me with an air so easy and confident, that I knew immediately that he had travelled. He acquainted me, that he was just returned from making the *grand tour*, and was come to take possession of his estate, and settle for the remainder of his days in Ireland. We then entered into conversation on different subjects, in which I acquitted myself with more ease than I expected I could have done in a state of such suspense. My affected cheerfulness was so well counterfeited, that it appeared to be real; and I kept up the ball with so much spirit, that my companion seemed to entertain a better opinion of me than he had done at first.

The test intended for the discovery of some dubious points, which will presently be known, having now been carried on as long as necessary, Miss Butler was sent to put a stop to our *tête à tête*. When my *Ganymede*, whose curiosity had been on tiptoe to find out who

I was, went to the upper end of the room, to make the needful inquiries of the lady of the house. Having in a whisper asked the question, Mrs. Butler answered *aloud*, "Surely, you must know her. I am certain you know her; nay, that you are well acquainted with her." The gentleman, not a little disconcerted at this want, in a lady of fashion, of what is usually termed *du monde*, that is, among other things, replying to a whisper in an audible voice; assured her, still in a low tone, that he had never seen me before, and now felt himself greatly interested in the inquiry. "Fye, fye, Mr. Medlicote," returned my patroness, "what can you say for yourself, when I inform you, that this is the dear girl whose character you so cruelly aspersed at dinner?"

I now plainly perceived, that this accomplished gentleman, vain of his attractive graces, had boasted, like too many others, of favours he had never received; not knowing that he did so in the presence of my best friends, and that there was a certainty of his false assertions being detected. The pencil of Hogarth alone could justly depicture the confusion of the gentleman at this discovery of his treachery; or of my petrefaction at finding myself the subject of his slander. It for some time totally deprived me of the use of every faculty. Till at length my patroness kindly relieved me from the situation in which I was absorbed.

absorbed. Coming up to me, she took me by the hand, and with a smile on her countenance thus addressed me: "My dear child, you have gone through a fiery trial; but it was a very necessary one. This gentleman has vilely traduced your character. We were all perfectly convinced that you did not merit what he said of you; but had he seen you first at the theatre, instead of here, he would, doubtlessly, have maintained his assertions with oaths, and there would then have been no possibility of contradicting them, however favourably we may have thought of you, notwithstanding. By the method we have pursued, though it has been somewhat irksome to you, his falsehoods have been so palpably disproved, as not to admit of the least palliation." Having said this, she embraced me in the most cordial manner. And as soon as I got from her embrace, I ran and threw myself into the arms of my dear aunt, who seemed to feel the utmost satisfaction at my triumph.

As for my traducer, it may be supposed he did not long disgust us with his company. Charming and accomplished as he was, there did not appear to be a wish among us all to detain him.—How much more charming and accomplished would he have been, had truth spread her refulgent beams over those perfections with which nature in so bounteous a manner

a manner had favoured him!—Of all human failings that of *detraction* is certainly one of the worst. The venom of the tongue is more fatal in its consequences than the deadly poison of the asp. It not only proves destructive to individuals, but to the peace and happiness of whole families.—But its fatal effects are so pointedly and beautifully described by that great master of nature, Shakspeare *, in the following well-known passage, that were I to fill up a whole letter with the severest censures reason and experience could dictate, I should not be able to say the twentieth part the tithe of what he has said in these *few* immortal lines.

“ Good name in man and woman

“ Is the immediate jewel of their souls;

“ Who steals my purse steals trash, ’tis

“ something, nothing;

“ ’Twas mine, ’tis his, and has been slave

“ to thousands;

“ But he that filches from me my good

“ name,

“ Robs me of that which not enriches

“ him,

“ And makes me poor indeed.”

G. A. R.

* Othello, Act III. Scene V.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R XXII.

March 31, 17—.

WHEN Mr. Medlicote was gone, one of the gentlemen present acquainted us, that during his travels, he became enamoured with a beautiful Italian lady; who, listening to his professions of love, left her family, and became the partner of his flight. Her brother, being informed of the seduction, pursued the fair fugitive and her paramour, and overtaking them, gave the gentleman his choice either to marry his sister, or settle the affair in the field of honour. Mr. Medlicote, finding there was no alternative, prudently chose the former, and they were accordingly united in indissoluble bonds.

All the company at Colonel Butler's seemed to agree in opinion, that had my family and fortune equalled his expectations, he would have considered his union with the Italian lady invalid, from its being an act of compulsion on his part, and without the least scruple have made me an offer of his hand, in defiance of honour, humanity, and every tender feeling. Mrs. Butler observed, that nothing could equal her pleasure at this public testimony of the falsity of Medlicote's accusation; for notwithstanding she was convinced of my innocence, and had found it fully confirmed by the propriety of my conduct since I had resided

sided in that kingdom, she could not have permitted her daughter to live in terms of strict intimacy with one whose reputation was not perfectly *unfullied*.

The last word *unfullied* struck me, at the time Mrs. Butler made use of it, with inexpressible force; and as there is no crime, as I have frequently said, that I hold in equal detestation with deceit, I determined, let what would be the consequence, to inform that lady the first opportunity that offered, that I was, unhappily, an unfit person for an intimate with her daughter, my character having been *fullied*, though very undeservedly, by the rude breath of scandal, through the wicked machinations of the noblemen formerly mentioned. For the present I contented myself with entering into a vindication of those of the profession in which I was engaged.

I told the company, that though many young men, through levity, were so inhuman as to blast the character of most of those females who were in the theatrical line, merely because they supposed their reputation was of so little consequence, that they were fit subjects for their sportive fancy; yet there were many, I was persuaded, who trod the stage, and were truly virtuous. I brought as examples a Pritchard and a Clive; to whom I said, I doubted not but many others might be added. I observed, that were actresses

treffes as chaste as vestals, such a tongue as a Medlicote's may by infamous insinuations blast their fame for ever, notwithstanding there were as little foundation for them, as those with regard to myself had just been discovered to have. I concluded with declaring that I thought a woman who preserved an unblemished reputation on the stage, to be infinitely more praiseworthy, than those who retained a good name, merely because they were secured by rank or fortune from the temptations actresses are exposed to; or than such as, through their mediocrity in life, do not fall in the way of the gay and dissolute. Here Colonel Butler interrupted my declamation by singing, "And she may be chaste that never was tried." This sally of his, which came in so *a-propos*, and tended to confirm the propositions I had just been striving to establish, restored cheerfulness; who, though she returned so late, was a very welcome visitor.

When I returned home, though it was very late, I could not sleep for the reflections which arose in my mind, on a review of the incidents of the day. "How much," cried I, "are the world mistaken in their ideas of *virtue*, as well as of *happiness*! the generality of mankind seem to comprise every virtue in that of *chastity*. Without doubt, chastity is one of the first and most justly admired virtues that adorns the female mind; yet when we consider,

" that

“ that punishment certainly attends a breach
“ of that virtue; that the great monitor
“ conscience is perpetually preying on the
“ heart of every frail fair one capable of
“ reflection; and that disgrace is their
“ consequent portion; surely the *truly* vir-
“ tuous ought rather to pity, and pour
“ balm into the bosom of those who are
“ thus unfortunately condemned to an
“ earthly purgatory, and may have many
“ extenuations to plead, than add to their
“ afflictions by reproaches or contempt.”—

Such were my sentiments at that period, young as I was, and such are they at this hour. But though I thus plead the cause of the unfortunate, it is not because I have unhappily a claim to the same lenity myself, or that I wish to extenuate a deviation from the path of rectitude in this point; I have as high a veneration for chastity and her *true* votaries, and I as much regret the loss of innocence (my mind still retaining its native purity) as the most unerring of my sex can do.— But as Hamlet says, “ Somewhat too much
“ of this.”

In the morning, after a restless night, I found myself in a fever. The different passions with which my mind had been agitated during the preceding evening, had been more than my body could bear, and a fever ensued. I was not in the least concerned at my
indisposition,

indisposition, as it gave me an opportunity of staying at home without offending any one. My friends, however, were greatly alarmed. Mrs. Butler and her beloved daughter did me the honour to pay me a visit, and my absence from the theatre was considered as a general calamity. During my confinement I could not help indulging my reflections on the subject which had lately taken possession of my mind; and I never before viewed the profession I had embraced in so humiliating a light as I now did through Medlicote's aspersions. That every fool who happened to be possessed of a fortune, should think himself licensed to take liberties with me; or even that my own footman, upon any dislike, should be able to go for a shilling into the theatre, and insult me; was what I could not bear to think of. The very idea affected me so much, that I never could regain, from this time, the self-sufficiency I possessed before. My indisposition increased from these corroding thoughts; and it was several days before I was able to attend at the theatre. When I did so, a disagreeable event happened, which retarded my perfect recovery, and, with some other concurrent circumstances, was the cause of my leaving Ireland.

Mr. Sheridan, in consequence of the insult I had received from Mr. St. Leger, as before related, and on account of the inconveniences arising from the custom, had given a general order at the doors of the theatre, and notice in

in all the public papers, that no gentleman was, on any account, to be admitted behind the scenes. It happened one night, just as I was so far recovered as to venture to the house, but not to perform; that an officer, who had more wine in his head, than humanity in his heart, insisted on passing the centry placed at the stage-door. The poor fellow persisting in his refusal of admittance, the officer drew his sword and stabbed him in the thigh, with so much violence, that the weapon broke, and left a piece in the most dangerous part. Hearing a riot on the stage, I ran from the box in which I sat, and flew in my fright to the next centinel for protection. This happening to be the man who had been wounded, I found myself in a moment encompassed by numbers, and was obliged to be a witness to the broken steel being taken out. The unexpectedness of this scene, and the terrors I was thrown into by it, as I was not perfectly restored to health, were productive of a relapse. The man, however, happily recovered through the placidness of his disposition; but having lost the use of his leg, the offender, who was a man of quality, provided for him for life.

G. A. B.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

April 5, 17—.

ABOUT the time that I was so well recovered of my disorder as to be able to play again, Mr. Barry, wishing to try his fortune in England, went off without giving the manager any previous notice, or paying any respect to his articles. I have already observed that Mr. Sheridan was held in high estimation by the people of Dublin. The young gentlemen belonging to the college looked upon him as a divinity. The ladies of his acquaintance flattered him; and his own vanity misguided him. Thus situated, he thought himself equal to any undertaking the stage required. So that, upon Mr. Barry's departure, he left the characters in which he could have no competitor, to enter into the walk of lovers and genteel comedy. It is true, his figure was tolerable, and might have suited this line; but his voice and manner totally precluded him from making any comparative stand in them.

It was not long before he was convinced of his mistake; and seemed by his revival of Æsop to wish to find out plays that were more suited to his scientific talents. In casting a part for me in this piece, that of the Young Lady was considered as too insignificant. The

Categorical

Categorical Lady required too much volubility, and I was obliged to put up with that of Doris, which was the character of an old nurse; and a part of such immense length, that this and Æsop's made two thirds of the performance.

There was no doubt but Mr. Sheridan, who must be allowed to be the best declaimer that ever trod our stage, would have made a very capital figure in a character which was so conspicuously marked out for his talents, had not the performance been interrupted on the first night of its representation. The house was so much crowded, that a *person*, I will not so far degrade the title of *gentleman*, as to bestow on him that appellation, finding himself inconveniently situated in the pit, got over the spikes which divide that part from the stage. This removal received marks of disapprobation from many of the audience, who by no means approved of the new regulation, which debarred them from coming behind the scenes. Mr. Kelly (that was the person's name) was not a little pleased that he had escaped from his confined situation, and at the same time shewn by this manoeuvre an appearance of courage, which he was conscious he did not really possess.

Elevated with his success, he made his way to the green-room. Having heard much of the liberties taken by the gentlemen with the performers, during the time that they were

were admitted behind the scenes, I had adopted Mr. Quin's mode of confining myself to my dressing-room. But being apprehensive that I was not perfect in a scene which was mostly lines, and which I was to repeat in the next act, I went into the green-room to request Mrs. Dyer to run it over with me.

When I entered the room, I observed that lady to be greatly confused, and that she could not move out of an arm-chair in which she sat, from a man's impeding her. She whispered me as I drew near, that Kelly had most grossly insulted her. Upon which, not considering the brutality of a drunken man, particularly of an illiterate Irishman when drunk, I asked her why she staid to hear him? I had no sooner said this, than I observed I had offended the brute, and accordingly ran out of the green-room into my dressing-room, which adjoined to it. When I got in, I prudently locked the door, judging that a wretch who could dare to insult a woman with an indelicate conversation, would dastardly strike or misuse any of the sex, on a supposed offence. It was a very providential circumstance that I had pursued this step; for I had scarcely done so, when Kelly pursued me, and attempted to force the door; at the same time swearing vengeance against me.—What outrages against decency, decorum, and humanity, are drunken men guilty of, even if ignorance and brutality are not

united with intoxication! It was no bad custom of the ancient Romans, to make their slaves drunk once a year, that their children might be witnesses to the detestable consequences of inebriation, and early learn to abhor it.

The noise which Kelly made at my dressing-room door alarmed the audience, and drew the manager to inquire into the cause of it. Finding Kelly thus riotously disposed, he desired him to quit the scenes. The other refusing, Mr. Sheridan ordered him to be turned out by force. He now found room in the pit, as several of the manager's friends, on hearing the disturbance, had left their places, and gone into his room to learn the occasion of it. The play proceeded till we were come to the first scene of the last act, when an orange or apple was thrown at Mr. Sheridan, who played the character of Æsop, and so well directed, that it dented the iron of the false nose which he wore, into his forehead.

Mr. Sheridan was not only born and bred a gentleman, but possessed as much personal courage as any man breathing. It may therefore be supposed, that he would not put up with such an indignity. He went forward, and addressed the audience, or the person that was supposed to throw it; but what he said, my fright prevented me from hearing. The curtain was then dropped, and the piece left unfinished. The foolish being who had occasioned this confusion, Kelly, now went to

the manager's room to demand satisfaction. And this he immediately gave him in the most ample manner, with an oak stick, which, as *Æsop*, he had carried in his hand during the performance; whilst Kelly, to the great entertainment of such of Mr. Sheridan's friends as were present, fell upon the ground in tears, crying out at the same time, "that he should severely repent this usage to a gentleman." To the disgrace of the military (for he wore a cockade) during this humiliating scene, Mr. Kelly had a sword by his side.

When the manager had given Kelly this severe correction for his insolence and brutality, he suffered him to crawl away, for walk he could not, to Lucas's Coffee-House. As soon as he got there, he claimed the compassion of the company; and having informed them how ill he had been used, to interest them the more in his favour, falsely added, that Mr. Sheridan had had the audacity to declare, that he was a better gentleman than any one who had been that night at the theatre. It is necessary here to acquaint you, that Lucas's Coffee-House is the place to which the Irish gentlemen usually resort to decide, in an honourable way, their quarrels. Whilst the combatants retire into the yard to acquire glory, the rest of the company flock to the windows, to see that no unfair advantages are taken, and to make bets on which of them falls first. And of these

combats, I can assure you, there are not a few; the Hibernians being extremely capacious; and very often ready to take offence where none is intended. You must "speak by the card" amongst them, or a quarrel will ensue. They are possessed of many good qualifications, but this seems to be one of the foibles of the country.

It is not to be wondered at, that persons of this cast should be easily excited to enter into any proposal which seemed likely to be productive of a riot. More especially, as most of the frequenters of Lucas's, at that time, had a natural antipathy to all learning, except that kind of knowledge which enabled them to distinguish good claret from bad. They therefore one and all agreed to sally forth to lay siege to Smock-Alley-Theatre, and sacrifice the presumptuous manager of it, for having forfeited the name of gentleman, by appearing upon the stage. They likewise had another excitement, which was no less powerful with persons of their liberal way of thinking; and that was his having had the misfortune to have had a classical education, which he had greatly improved by application and intense study.

Mr. Sheridan not supposing any persons could be found weak enough to abet such a cowardly being, imagined the affair was over, at least for that night; and he had retired, to enjoy himself with some of his friends. The
theatre

theatre was also shut up. The heroes, however, made a brave assault against it, and strove to force the doors. But finding them too strongly barricaded, to hope for success, they retired for that night.

The next evening, the *Fair Penitent* was to be performed for the benefit of a public charity. Notwithstanding which, upon the appearance of Mr. Sheridan, in the character of Horatio, *the Bucks*, as they termed themselves, immediately arose, and cried, "Out with the ladies, and down with the house." It is impossible to describe to you the horrors of a riot at a Dublin theatre. The consternation and fright which it occasioned among the ladies, with whom the stage was exceedingly crowded, is beyond conception. Husbands and brothers were busily employed in taking care of their wives and sisters; and all was a scene of confusion.

Mr. Sheridan was early advised by his friends to quit the house; but he would not hear of it. However, when the rioters leaped upon the stage, and threatened his life, he found a retreat absolutely necessary for the preservation of it. Had he not prudently taken this step, these sons of Bacchus would certainly have put their threats into execution; for they broke open every door in the house, to find the *offender*, as they called him. These dastardly ruffians broke open the wardrobe, and as they could not find the manager, they

revenged themselves upon the stuffing of Falstaff, which they stabbed in many places.

In their researches, they did me the honour of a visit. Two gentlemen of quality having joined the rioters, out of curiosity, one of them Mr. Edward Hufsey, now Lord Beaulieu, the other Mr. Mirvan, they came to the door of my dressing-room, and very politely told me, they were come to protect me from insult. But apprehending them, in my fright, to be leaders of the mob, and finding that the rioters were determined to leave no part of the theatre unsearched, instead of returning thanks for their politeness, as I should have done, I answered, with some acrimony, "that my room was an improbable place to find the person they wanted, as I certainly should not undress, was there a gentleman in it."

Upon this Kelly advanced, and mistaking me, as I imagined, for Mrs. Dyer, said I was the —— who had occasioned all the disturbance. And I don't know whether I should have escaped further insult, had I not, in a resolute tone of voice, ordered them to quit the room. To this at length they consented, upon being permitted to lift up the covering of my toilette, to see whether the manager was there. As soon as they were departed I hurried to my chair, and Mr. Hufsey had the humanity to walk by the side of it, to see me safe home. And I was never more rejoiced in my life, than when I found myself secure within the doors.

The

The magistrates having reason to apprehend that greater mischief would ensue, if the theatre continued open, ordered it to be shut up till the benefits commenced. The affair, however, did not end here; for the College-Boys, as they are usually termed, in order to revenge the cause of their fellow-student, as well as to shew their resentment at being deprived of their favourite amusement, took it into their heads to pay Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Kelly, and several other ring-leaders of the rioters, a morning visit, and obligingly invited them to partake of a breakfast at their college; where they bestowed as much cold water upon them from their pump, as served to keep their heads perfectly cool to defend their cause against the manager, who had the same day commenced a prosecution against them.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R XXIV.

April 10, 17—.

AFTER the account I gave you in my last, can you wonder, Madam, at my being less pleased with the profession I was engaged in, than I was when youth and

inexperience presented to my view only the pleasing side of it; or that I grew tired of a country, where I was subject to such continual alarms? A learned friend of mine frequently made use of the Latin phrase, *Experientia docet*. Experience teaches, I think, he told me, was the English of it. And I am sure it has taught me, that there is no state of life but what has its inconveniences as well as its conveniences; and the odds are, that the latter are more abundant than the former. But let me no longer detain you from my story.

Being always expected at Colonel Butler's, when I was not at the theatre, and that family having just heard of the riot, they were much alarmed for my safety. I, consequently, received a very pressing letter, the next morning, requesting that I would immediately come to them at their country-house, where they at that time were. But I was so much indisposed, from the terrors I had lately experienced, that I begged to be excused till the day following.

As my mother had usually so little of my company, she was pleased with my refusal to go to Colonel Butler's, and proposed great satisfaction from my spending the day with her. In the afternoon I sent my servant, Mrs. O'Bryen, of whom I have made honourable mention before, to inquire after our good friend Doctor Walker, who was ill of a fever.

fever. About seven o'clock she returned, with a countenance full as expressive of horror as his could be, "who drew Priam's curtains in the dead of night, and told him half his Troy was burnt." She had no sooner entered the room, than she began to exclaim, in a most doleful tone, "Oh Madam, Oh Madam!" which was all she was able to utter; and it was some time before we could get an explanation from her. At length she informed us, that the poor doctor had died during the last night, and that they were already going to bury him. She added, that as they were about to shroud the body, the orifices which had been made in his arms, on bleeding him before his decease, had bled afresh.

As it was now so late in the evening; as the house we had lately removed to was full two miles from the doctor's residence; as my mother had been confined some months by the rheumatism; and as I was so much indisposed; it was impossible for either my mother or myself to reach the place of his abode time enough to prevent his premature interment; which, but for these reasons, we certainly should have done. We likewise found that Mrs. Walker had been prevailed on, by the earnest entreaties of her sister, to leave the house, and retire with her to Dunleary. My mother, therefore, ordered the servant to take a coach, and if the corpse

was interred, to have it taken up at all events, cost what it would.

You can give the common people of Ireland no greater treat than a wake. Our maid, consequently, had many companions before she reached the house; especially as she made no secret of her errand. When they arrived, they learned that the body had been interred immediately after her departure, lest the disorder he died of, which was thought to be epidemic, should prove contagious. They were further informed, that as Mrs. Walker was of the sect of Anabaptists, it had been deposited, by her order, in their burying-ground, which was situated at the extremity of the city.

The people who accompanied our servant having come out with an intention of spending the night in their favourite amusement, they now resolved to go to seek the sexton, and carry my mother's commands into execution: but as it was so late, they could not find his house. They, however, as no obstructions can retard the Irish in any favourite pursuit, clambered over the gate, men, women, and children, and thus entered the receptacle of the dead. Whilst they sat round the grave, O'Bryen heard, or *thought* he heard, a groan; which made them expect with great impatience the return of day-light.

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As soon as Aurora made her appearance, some labourers, who had just come to their work, acquainted them where the sexton lived; and he was prevailed on, though not without some difficulty, to comply with their request. Accordingly, the canonized bones of the doctor, which had, a few hours before, "been hearsed in death, revisited the "glimpses of the morn." Upon opening the coffin (I shudder whilst I relate the horrid scene) they found the body now totally deprived of life, but observed that the late inhabitant of it had endeavoured to "burst his "cearments," and leave the dreadful mansion in which he was confined. He had actually turned upon his side; and, as my servant had reported, his arms had bled afresh. The coffin was carried to the house of the sexton, where multitudes, excited by curiosity, flocked from all parts to see this memorable instance of *fruitless precaution*. The family, however, hearing of the circumstances, the body was ordered to be re-interred, and the affair was hushed up.

Are you casuist enough to tell me how it happens, that we are generally disappointed in the grand expectations of our lives; and find our favourite wishes crossed? Never was there a more singular confirmation of this fact, than in the case of the doctor. The fear of being buried alive seems to have engrossed *all* his thoughts. The apprehensions which arose in

his mind, both on his own account and that of others, furnished him with an inexhaustible fund for conversation, and gave frequent employment to his pen. The presentiment which had taken possession of him was not to be suppressed. But alas! how unavailing, from a combination of preventive circumstances, did it prove!—Let it serve as a document to us, not to fix our hearts, with too much anxiety, on any object that lies within the reach of the accidents of life, or to indulge too great apprehensions of any dreaded evil.

I was greatly affected at the melancholy accident which had just happened, but my mother was almost distracted at being obliged to break a promise she had so solemnly made, and which would have proved so consonant to the wishes of her old friend. Having, at the time I first mentioned this promise, given you my sentiments on the observance of it, I shall only add here, that a breach of a solemn engagement is always attended with regret, as my mother now found to her cost.

I have often wondered that humanity, exclusive of affection, does not prevent those who have had a regard for persons during their lives, from leaving them in their last moments, through a *false tenderness*, to the care of nurses and servants, who are usually insensible to every claim but those of their own ease or interest. Too susceptible of pain, from beholding the expiring pangs of a beloved object, they

they hasten from it. Whereas that ought to be the strongest motive for their stay, as these would stimulate them to unremitted assiduity in administering every needful assistance whilst life remains, and to a due attention to the body till its interment. The most pleasurable reflection I now am sensible of, is, that the three persons I loved and esteemed most, expired in my arms. These were, my dear Miss Conway, my mother, and a worthy and much-regretted friend, many of the incidents of whose life you will find hereafter interwoven with my own.

A tear that obtrudes itself on the recollection of scenes, which have already caused me so many, dims my sight;—others follow, and trickle in quick succession down my cheek. The subject awakens all my sensibility. And, surely, a heart more susceptible of all the tender feelings never throbbed in a female bosom. The soft effusion overwhelms me. I must lay down my pen.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R XXV.

April 17, 17—.

FORGIVE the abrupt conclusion of my last. Every tender sensation was aroused, when the loss of such dear and valued

valued friends became, even by anticipation, the subject of my pen. The trickling tear would not be repelled. I will however now endeavour to proceed with more composure.

It being impossible for me to leave my mother in the situation she was reduced to by the late melancholy incident, I sent an apology to my respected patroness, informing her, at the same time, of the cause. From the many disagreeable circumstances which had lately occurred, one upon another, my mind took as serious a turn as when I lived in retirement at the Farmer's at Ingatestone. I lost my vivacity, and delighted more in being alone than in company. To this, the frequent visits of Mr. Crump, who I now found courted me by proxy, made no little addition. His being always a constant attendant at my mother's parties rendered home disagreeable to me.

My mother endeavoured to find out the cause of a change so totally contrary to my natural disposition, but in vain. Having heard me speak warmly in praise of the outward attractions of Medlicote, she was apprehensive that the superficial qualifications of that empty man had captivated me. But when she reflected that she had as frequently heard me declare, that I would not marry him, were he disengaged, and offered me his hand; placing a confidence in that sincerity which had ever been my boast, her fears

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vanished

vanished relative to him. What then could be the cause? for a cause there must be. This perplexed her. And as she was very desirous of seeing me married to Mr. Crump, preferring easy circumstances to happiness, she was anxious to find out and remove it.

Whilst I appeared in public, she was neither surprised nor displeased at seeing verses addressed to me from one dying swain or other; but my praise having been frequently refounded by an unknown Strephon, since the theatre had been shut up, and I lived a more recluse life, her fears were excited by it. And laying aside the sorrow she had lately suffered for her deceased friend, substituted in its room anxiety for her living daughter. So suspicious now was she become of my having entered into some tender engagement without her consent, that even the strongest testimony of affection that I could give her, that of almost constantly staying at home with her, could not remove her apprehensions. It even added to them, as she considered such novel behaviour only as a contrivance to hear the oftner from this favoured admirer.

Upon my mother's intrusting Mr. Crump with her suspicions, he also took the alarm, and never rested till he had discovered the author of the verses which had been the cause of their fears, and, as they supposed, of the alteration in my temper.

In

In the neighbourhood of our residence lived a gentlewoman who was related to most of the Catholics of distinction in the kingdom of Ireland. She had married a Mr. Kendall, belonging to the Custom-House, by whom she had several children. Finding, however, her husband's income inadequate to the support of so large a family, she had, agreeable to the advice of her friends, set up a subscription card-assembly. Her daughters likewise employed themselves in making the linen of their relations, for which they were generally well paid.

As this assembly was kept in Britain-Street, which joined to Summer-Hill, where we resided; having been often invited to go to it, I one day sent my name down, and went the same evening. I had the honour of being personally known to most of the company. There was a young gentleman, however, whom I could not recollect that I had ever seen before; though, as I was afterwards informed, he had been my constant attendant and admirer at the theatre. His name was Jephson, and he was of Trinity-College. Whilst I sat at cards, this youth was rivetted to the back of my chair; and upon my getting up to go home, he requested leave to escort me.

When we reached my mother's, without having the least idea of giving her umbrage or room for censure, I asked him in, that I might have an opportunity of introducing him

to her. I could not help observing, that she received him with unusual formality and reserve. As soon as he was gone, my mother asked me how long I had been acquainted with Mr. Jephson? I told her, with a composure that staggered her, that to the best of my knowledge I had not seen him till that night. Not satisfied with this declaration, she desired that I would *give her my honour* to what I had said. To which I replied, with an insolence that stabs me to the heart as I repeat it, “I will never give my honour, Madam, to any one who *dares* to dispute my word.”

I had no sooner uttered the word *dares*, than the impropriety of it immediately struck me. And every time the conversation occurs to my memory, I feel an inexpressible pang at my having presumed to make use of it to a parent.—Remorse and disquietude *ought* to be the portion of all those who lose sight of the duty they owe to their parents.—*Honour* thy father and thy mother—how strong the injunction!—and how pleasing the reward—that thy days may be long, &c. Next to the reverence due from us to the universal Parent of mankind, stands the duty we owe our earthly parents; one is equally as obligatory as the other. Thank Heaven! it was only in this instance, and this was not from the heart, that I ever knowingly offended the author of my birth. It was my misfortune to be tenacious to a degree, relative to the attribute

attribute I so much valued myself on, sincerity; and whatever seemed to reflect on that, gave me offence. I was conscious of my petulance (to call it by no harsher name) the moment it escaped me; yet, reluctant to acknowledge my error, or to submit, as I ought to have done, I ordered the horses to be put to, before my mother was up, and set off to join my beloved friends.

Alarmed at my perseverance, and knowing my temper was to be moulded to her own wishes by gentle means, but, if controuled, that it would run retrograde, even to the extreme of obstinacy, she sent a messenger to me with a letter the next day. In it she requested that I would excuse what she had said the day before, it being the result of her apprehensions for my welfare, as she had been informed that Mr. Jephson, the young gentleman who had seen me home, was the enamorado who had sung my praise so frequently of late. To which she added, that the unusual reserve and gloom which had for some time clouded my brow, seemed to confirm her suspicions; which if well founded, as she hoped they were not, must prove destructive to my happiness, he being entirely dependent on his relations, and had it not in his power to provide for me as she could wish.

My mother's condescension affected me the more, as I was by this time, from the reflections which I had leisure to indulge, truly sensible

sible that I had been to blame; and the more so, from her dependent situation on me, which ought to have made me more circumspect in my duty towards her, and the more careful of giving her offence. There is a delicacy in this point, of which unthinking and vulgar minds are not susceptible; but it weighs much with every well-bred person, and all such as have a just idea of propriety of conduct. I wrote her consequently a submissive answer, and informed her that I would return the next day. But an express arriving with an account that Lord Lansborough, a near relation of Colonel Butler's, was dangerously ill, we all returned to Dublin the same evening.

I was not displeased at being obliged to return so soon, as I was miserable till I made an atonement to my mother for my undutiful behaviour. She received me with that pleasure which is ever united with real affection, and I never spent an evening with more satisfaction. Being thus reconciled to each other, and that confidence which had hitherto subsisted between us being restored, she desired me to inform her, without any reserve, of the cause of my late thoughtfulness. I acquainted her, with truth, that it solely arose from the precariousness of my present situation, which every day became more and more disagreeable to me. I then recapitulated the following circumstances:

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In the first place I was apprehensive that as soon as the theatre was opened again Mr. Sheridan would appear in the characters of Antony, Romeo, &c. and from playing with a person so disqualified by nature for such parts, I too much feared I should lose in some measure the reputation I had gained.—In the next place, the declining health of my worthy and much loved Mrs. Butler gave me great uneasiness. And as she proposed going to Spa for her recovery, and after that to the South of France, it would be a very very long time before I had the happiness to see her again, if ever I did.—To these causes of sorrow may be added the loss of Miss St. Leger's company. A friend for whom I had the tenderest regard, and who had staid but a short month in Dublin. Mrs. O'Hara was likewise confined to her room, by which I was deprived of being with her so much as duty and affection prompted.—The last, but not the least reason of my disquiet, was my apparent ingratitude to Mr. Quin. My leaving England without consulting him on the engagement I was about to enter into, or even without taking leave of him, often struck me forcibly, and gave me many a pang. A false modesty, I now perceived, had made me avoid that dear man. Instead of considering him as my Mentor, and unobtrusively consulting him upon every occasion that required the counsel of experience and probity, I left the country in which

he

he resided. From him should I have always been sure of meeting with relief, compassion, and comfort. My regard for him was truly filial. Whilst I loved him, I dreaded his frowns more than any misfortune which could befall me. But bashfulness conquered affection.—With sincerity and truth thus did I unfold to my mother the causes of that alteration in my demeanour, which she could not account for. As there is a confidence attending innate rectitude that commands belief, she readily gave credit to my assertions, and was convinced of the propriety of my feelings. My vanity prompts me to conclude this letter with some lines, my Inamorato Mr. Jephson wrote upon me in the character of Belvidera.

“Hail child of Nature, and the pride of

“Art!

“Equally form’d to glad and pain the

“heart.

“Thro’ various passions you accomplish’d

“shine,

“Your looks expressive speak the coming

“line.

“Ador’d while living, with applause you die;

“Each Judge beholds you with a Jaffier’s

“eye.”

April 24. —17.

AS the conclusion of my last letter was rather prolix, I shall enter on my story again, without any preamble to this.—It will soon be seen that the apprehensions I entertained relative to my situation at the theatre were realized; and that the greatest error I had ever committed was the rejecting Mr. Garrick's offer. The next day I was informed that the Lord-Mayor had permitted Mr. Sheridan to open the theatre; but he was not allowed to perform till his trial with the persons who caused the riot was decided.

I am now about to mention an incident in my life, which relates to persons who have made a very conspicuous figure in the great world. As I was returning one day from rehearsal, at the bottom of Britain-Street, I heard the voice of distress. Yielding to an impulse of humanity, I overleaped the bounds of good breeding, and entered the house from whence it proceeded. When I had done this, led by an irresistible attraction, I entered without ceremony the parlour, the door of which appeared to be guarded by persons not at all suited to those within. I here found a woman of a most elegant figure, surrounded by four beautiful girls, and a sweet boy of about three years of age. After making the necessary apologies for my abrupt intrusion, I informed the lady, that as the lamentations of her little family had reached my ears as I passed by,

by, I had taken the liberty of a neighbour to inquire if I could render her any service.

Mrs. Gunning, for that was the lady's name, arose immediately from her seat, and calling me by my name, thanked me for the offer of my assistance, complimenting me at the same time, upon possessing such humane sensations. She then informed me, that having lived beyond their income, her husband had been obliged to retire into the country, to avoid the disagreeable consequences that must ensue. That she had been in hopes that her brother, Lord Mayo, listening to the dictates of fraternal affection, would not suffer a sister and her family to be reduced to distress; but that his Lordship remained inflexible to her repeated solicitations. The ill-looking men, I now found, had entered the house by virtue of an execution, and were preparing to turn her and her children out of doors.

Upon this, Mrs. Gunning and myself went up stairs to consult what was best to be done in so disagreeable a predicament. We there determined that I should return home, and send my man-servant, who was to wait under the window of the drawing-room, in the evening, and bring to my house every thing that could be thrown to him. It was further agreed, that as my mother and I had more room than we could conveniently occupy, the children and their servant should remain with us, whilst she went to her husband to assist him in settling his affairs. The whole of our plan
being

being carried into execution, Miss Burke, Mrs. Gunning's sister, a lady of exemplary piety, who had passed her probation in the community of Channel-Row, sent shortly after for the two youngest girls, and the two eldest were permitted, to my great pleasure, to remain at our house. As the beauty of these ladies has since made so much noise in the world, and has been so recently imprinted on the memory of every rank, it will be unnecessary here to give a description of them. I shall, therefore, only observe, that the eldest, Maria, the late Countess of Coventry, was all life and spirits; and that Miss Betty, the younger, now Dutchess of Argyll, &c. &c. with a longer train of noble titles than perhaps ever woman enjoyed before her, was more reserved and solid.

Here let me stop to bestow a remark once more on the strange vicissitudes of this sublunary state! Innumerable are the instances to be found in history, and many happen within our own observation, of the rise and fall of families. Some we see, whose honours and affluence appear to be founded on so broad and permanent a basis, that neither time nor accident can affect them; and yet in a few short years, undermined by unforeseen and unavoidable events, they dissolve away, and, like "the baseless fabrick" of a vision, leave not a wreck behind." Whilst others, from being environed with

distress;

distress; apprehensive of the approach of penury; and nearly a prey to despair, through incidents equally unaccountable and sudden; the darksome clouds all cleared away, find themselves exalted to a state of splendour, with the hopes of which the most luxuriant fallies of their imagination could not have flattered them. Permit me to detain you a moment longer, whilst I just add, by way of illustration, that the *very first page* of history presents us with a memorable instance of the instability of human happiness in the fate of the first created pair. From the never-ceasing and inexpressible joys of paradise, where every wish was anticipated, and pleasures, real and lasting, grew spontaneously, did our great progenitors find themselves driven into a world of care, affliction, and uncertainty, there to earn, by a life of labour and toil, a precarious subsistence. What a heart-rending reverse to this once happy pair.

This season Mr. Woodward, an actor of the first merit in comedy, came to Dublin, and joined our company. About the same time Mr. Foote arrived *to give tea*, as he termed his exhibition; which consisted of mimickry, wherein he imitated or *took off* the voice and manner of most of the performers in England and Ireland. I never could find out what analogy there was between *tea* and the talent of *mimickry*. But as our modern Aristophanes was, undoubtedly, a man of learning, as well

as of wit and humour, there must be a *propriety* in his adopting the appellation, though it lies beyond the reach of my weak intellects.

Mr. Sheridan being now permitted again to tread the stage, some of the apprehensions which had been the cause of my uneasiness began to be realized. He played, as I had apprehended, the character of Antony. But, oh! what a falling off was here! Instead of the silver-toned voice and bewitching figure of a Barry, which used to enchant the audience, formality and monotonous declamation presented itself. The difference was too conspicuous to escape the observation of the public. And every one regretted the loss of his great powers in the part of Ventidius, wherein, as I have before observed, he was truly capital; as indeed he was in all *sententious* characters. To render, however, the piece as pleasing as possible, a dance of gladiators was introduced, as an entertainment to the enamoured queen. To add to my distress during my performing the part of Cleopatra, Mrs. Kennedy happening unfortunately to have a ragged tail to her dress, pulled upon the stage after her the half of a kettle drum. Alarmed at hearing so uncommon a noise, I turned about, whilst in the warmth of my inquiry after my much-loved hero, and seeing the droll circumstance that occasioned it, I could not refrain from bursting into a loud fit of laughter, in which the audience joined me. Nor could I compose my

my countenance till the asp had finished my night's duty.

As there was soon an essential difference in the receipts of the house from what they had been during the last season, I was desired by the manager to give orders to all the young ladies of my acquaintance that would condescend to accept of them. In consequence of this desire, scarcely a night passed on which I did not grant an introduction to several with whom I had formed an intimacy at Mrs. Kendall's assembly, as well as my two lovely visitants.

Mr. Woodward being attacked by Foote in his humourous exhibition, got up, in his defence, a piece, which he termed "Tit for Tat, or a Dish of Chocolate." This was attended with such success, that his rival, being defeated at his own weapons, left the field to his opponent, and precipitately retired to the Haymarket-Theatre. When the benefits commenced, Mr. Woodward, exclusive of his agreement with the manager, received ten guineas a night from each performer, at whose benefit the piece just mentioned was acted.

When I first made my appearance at Covent-Garden-Theatre, this gentleman had solicited my hand. A refusal being given, we were not, from that time, on the best terms. Resentment, however, giving way to interest, he was very happy to have a tolerable actress perform with him. The Careless Husband was revived. His Lord Foppington was, as

usual, justly admired. Nor did I fail of applause in Lady Betty Modish. I wish I could say as much of the manager. He played the character of Sir Charles Easy; but it would, I think, have been more *a-propos*, if the syllable *un* had been prefixed to the last word, and the baronet's name had been Sir Charles Uneasy; so awkwardly did the part sit on the performer of it. The characters of this play were dressed, by direction of Mr. Sheridan, in the manufactory of Ireland, which he judiciously thought, would increase at once his popularity and receipts.

The season drawing to a conclusion, my mother, at my request, determined to return to England. And this resolution was accelerated by the treasurer of the theatre bringing in my account, with a charge of *seventy-five pounds for orders*. As it was at the express desire of the manager, that these orders were issued, I could by no means admit of such an imposition. A dispute consequently ensued between Mr. Sheridan and myself, when I absolutely refused to play any more. Mr. Victor the treasurer, however, came to me the next day, with the balance of my account, offering to pay me the whole sum, if I would enter into a fresh engagement. But the illiberal treatment I received upon this occasion from the manager would have induced me to withhold my consent, had not the reasons alleged added their weight to fix me in the performance of my resolution.

Before

Before my departure, I took leave of all my acquaintance. A painful task to a susceptible mind! Mrs. O'Hara pressed me to her bosom with the most affectionate warmth; and we did not part without many tears. My dear and honoured patroness, together with her much-loved daughter, shewed the tenderest concern at losing me; and the pain I felt upon the occasion was equal to their own. They, as well as my aunt, made me some considerable presents. The separation from such invaluable friends, for such they were in the strictest sense of the word would not have been so pungent, had there been a probability of my seeing either my aunt or Mrs. Butler again. From the age and infirmities of the former it was not to be expected. And the illness of the latter, though lingering, was pronounced to be fatal.

One inducement for hastening our departure was, that Lord Tyrawley was returned from his embassy at Russia, and was coming to Dublin to pay the last duties to his sister, Mrs. O'Hara. My mother seemed to regret nothing so much as leaving Mr. Crump; for whom, from the intimacy that had subsisted between them, she entertained great respect. Upon our return, that gentleman advised her to lay out what money she had saved, which was no inconsiderable sum, in Irish linens. This she did, and found it turn out to advantage.

The friendship I had entertained for my two lovely visitors was now increased to the ten-

derest affection. If there was any difference, it was in favour of the elder, whose disposition more nearly resembled my own; and from whom I felt it the most painful to part. This partiality created no little jealousy in the bosom of Miss Butler, who claimed the first place in my heart, from the priority of our acquaintance. And to an indifferent person, the letters I received from her, upon that occasion, would appear to have been dictated by the green-eyed monster himself. But that young lady was soon convinced of the permanency of my attachment to her. And though I have not had the pleasure of seeing her for many years, it still continues unabated.

LETTER XXVII.

April 29, 17—.

I COULD not leave a kingdom where I had met with so favourable a reception in public; where I had received so many civilities from persons of the highest rank; and where I was honoured with the friendship of some of the most amiable of my own sex; without yielding to the whispers of gratitude, and returning back one tributary sigh. But such a variety of circumstances having rendered a longer abode in Ireland disagreeable, I own it was not without great satisfaction, that I found myself once more in England.

Upon

Upon our arrival in London my mother wrote to Mr. Garrick, informing him of it. Happening to be in town, he immediately sent to us, requesting we would dine with him that day. He had at that time apartments in King-Street, Covent-Garden, and we had hired lodgings in Southampton-Street. He received us with that cheerfulness and civility which constituted a part of his character. During our visit we laughed over many incidents which had happened whilst we were together in Ireland; particularly, the consequential present he had received from my dear friend Mrs. Butler. And he much regretted, that it was not in his power, from the present situation of his company, to admit me into it; Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Pritchard, engrossing all the principal characters. At parting he requested, that nothing might interrupt the harmony which then subsisted between us. As I had not then heard of the declaration he had made, relative to his never engaging me upon any terms, as before mentioned, I promised to continue on a friendly footing with him.

I inquired after my valued friend Mr. Quin, and was informed that he was at Bath, to which place he usually retired during the recesses. As soon as Mr. Rich heard of our return, he sent Mr. Bencraft, a performer for whom he had a particular friendship, and who therefore resided with him, to give us

an invitation to pay him a visit at Cowley, where he then was. As I was very desirous to see that sweet spot, of the beauties of which I had heard so much talk, I did not hesitate, for my own part, to become his guest; but was prevented, for the present, by an engagement of my mother's.

This place, which was the summer residence of Mr. Rich, and to which he was making very considerable improvements, formerly belonged to the well-known Mrs. Montford, now Mrs. Vanbruggen, wife to the promising actor of that name, who was unfortunately murdered as he was escorting the celebrated Mrs. Bracegirdle home from the theatre. On Mrs. Montford was the justly celebrated and well-known ballad of Black-eyed Susan written by Mr. Gay. Lord Berkeley's partiality for this lady induced him to leave her at his decease three hundred pounds a year, on condition that she never married. His Lordship likewise purchased Cowley for her, and she besides received from him, at times, very considerable sums. After this she fell in love with that very capital actor Mr. Booth, but the desire of retaining her annuity prevented her from being joined in the bands of wedlock with the lover whom she preferred to numbers that were candidates for her favour. This consideration obstructing, - the union could not take place, and Mr. Booth soon found another mate.

Mrs.

Mrs. Vanbruggen had contracted an intimacy with Miss Santlow, a lady celebrated as a dancer, and esteemed a tolerable actress. She was the declared favourite of Secretary Craggs, through whose liberality she became possessed of a fortune sufficient to enable her to live independent of the stage. What Mrs. Montford could not effect, Miss Santlow did. Mr. Booth, transferring his attention from the former to the latter, soon obtained possession both of her person and fortune. Mrs. Montford no sooner heard of the perfidy of her lover, and the ingratitude of her friend, than she gave way to a desperation that deprived her of her senses. In this situation she was brought from Cowley to London, that the best advice might be procured for her.

As during the most violent paroxysms of her disorder she was not outrageous, and now and then a ray of reason beamed through the cloud that overshadowed her intellects, she was not placed under any rigorous confinement, but suffered to go about the house. One day, during a lucid interval, she asked her attendant what play was to be performed that evening? and was told, that it was Hamlet. In this piece, whilst she had been on the stage, she had always met with great applause in the character of Ophelia. The recollection struck her; and with that cunning which is usually allied to insanity, she found means to elude the care of her servants, and got to the theatre;

where concealing herself till the scene in which Ophelia was to make her appearance in her insane state, she pushed on the stage before her rival, who played the character that night, and exhibited a far more perfect representation of madness than the utmost exertions of mimic art could do. She was, *in truth*, Ophelia herself, to the amazement of the performers, as well as of the audience. Nature having made this *last* effort, her vital powers failed her. On her going off, she prophetically exclaimed, "It is all over!"—And, indeed, that was soon the case, for as she was conveying home (to make use of the concluding lines of another sweet ballad of Gay's, wherein her fate is so truly described) "She, like a lily" "drooping, then bowed her head, and died."*

I heard the foregoing incident related by Colley Cibber, at Lord Tyrawley's, during our residence at Bushy, to which residence he frequently came. But I have not repeated it in a manner that pleases me. My language will not reach my conceptions, nor my conceptions my sensibility.—Oh for the pen of Sterne to retouch it!—But it cannot be—I must therefore be content to jogg on in the humble line I have hitherto done.

* The reason that Colley Cibber has taken no notice of so remarkable a circumstance in his "Apology," must be owing to his friendship for Mrs. Booth, who was alive when he wrote it.

I need

I need not add, that such a moving catastrophe must naturally affect a mind so susceptible of the tender passions as mine, and make me wish to see the residence of the *fair Unfortunate*, whenever an opportunity offered. My mother, however, having another engagement upon her hands, I was obliged to suppress my curiosity till the latter end of the summer.

A nephew of her's, a Mr. Crawford, an attorney, had lately married the widow Silvester, who was possessed of a very large fortune. From him she received a pressing invitation to pass some time with them at Watford, in Hertfordshire. As this was near the abode of my dear Miss St. Leger, who resided with her uncle, Lord Doneraile, at the Grove, near Cashioberry-Park, the seat of the Earl of Essex, I more readily agreed to attend my mother, and postpone the acceptance of Mr. Rich's invitation.

It will here be necessary to give a description of my cousin Crawford, as I shall too often have occasion to introduce him in the subsequent pages. He was a short fat man, as to his stature, with a tolerable good face. So much for his person. As to his mind, it was not more correspondent to the rules of beauty. He was endowed with great cunning, vainly fond of being esteemed a wit, and profuse to a degree. His mother was that step-sister of my mother, who, as I have before related, lived with Mrs. Godfrey, and through the munificence of that

I 5 lady

lady had accumulated a considerable fortune. This induced Mr. Crawford, an eminent attorney in partnership with Mr. Greenhill, of the Temple, to solicit her hand in marriage, which she gave him. It was not long, however, before she was left a widow with this son, about three years of age, and a very considerable addition to her fortune.

All her happiness now centered in her son. She carried her fondness for him to the greatest extreme. He was never contradicted in the most unreasonable of his demands, and consequently was spoiled. When he arrived at a proper age, he was indentured to his late father's partner, Mr. Greenhill, on condition that at the expiration of his clerkship he was to transact, on his own account, all the common law business. To this he of course succeeded, and whether from the wretches he associated with during his practice, or from the principles instilled into him by nature, I will not pretend to say; but, under a specious appearance of good nature and honesty, he possessed all the chicanery of Jonathan Wild. His *cara sposa*, whom he had married for her fortune, notwithstanding he had a very considerable one of his own, was old enough to be his mother. Nature had not been very liberal to her, either in the charms of her person or mind. And even what little understanding she was blessed with was totally clouded by
a flu-

a stupefaction, arising from I will not say what. Whatever it was, her husband took care that it should not fail of a supply, to prevent certain remonstrances, usually termed curtain lectures, which were the consequence of his own frailties.

With persons of this cast, to be obliged to associate for six weeks or two months, agreeable to a promise made by my mother, you may be assured was not a little mortifying to your humble servant. And it would have been much more so, had it not been for the frequent visits I made to the Grove, and the walks I took in the delightful park belonging to the Earl of Essex, which lay contiguous to my cousin's house. To Miss St. Leger was I likewise indebted for another source of comfort and amusement, who lent me books from Lord Doneraile's library.

Mr. Crawford's table was well served; to which, as he kept a pack of fox-hounds, and a good stud of hunters for the use of himself and friends, there was usually no want of country gentlemen who delighted in that sport: From things being thus situated, it is not to be supposed that, with my taste for reading, and other kind of company, I staid much at home; especially as it was soon rendered more disagreeable by the addition of a son and heir to this *worthy* family, who came to inherit his father's *virtues*, and his mother's *great qualifications*. The attention of my good

parent being totally engaged by her amiable niece, and the new relation she had just presented her with; her nephew took this opportunity to set out for London, to regale himself with his friends the sheriffs officers, and ladies of easy virtue.

One day, as I sat reading Dryden's Virgil, on a bench in Lord Effex's park, an old gentleman came and seated himself by me. After sitting a little while, he asked me the subject of my studies? Upon my telling him, he seemed to be surprised that a girl of my age should have either taste or erudition enough to understand works of that kind. Piqued at this supposition, I undertook to vindicate my sex from the want of knowledge in literature generally imputed to them. I told him there would not be the least room for such a reflection, did not the lords of the creation take care that we should not eclipse them in this respect. The old gentleman then said, "As that is your opinion, I suppose you would have a *female* parliament." To which I replied, "I do not know that the present is much better, for I do not hear of any thing that is done among them, but scolding like *old women*."

This threw my new companion into a violent fit of laughter, from which when he was recovered, he was pleased to say, "that if ever he should have a daughter, he

“ hoped it was just such a one as me.” Then pulling out his watch he continued, “ I am sorry to leave you, Miss, but I must go to dinner, which I do not think I shall like, as the relation I am come to see is gone to London, and the good woman in the straw.” Concluding from these circumstances that the old gentleman was come to see my cousin, I informed him that I was upon a visit at the same house ; and as it was near three o’clock, I got up, when he did, to return home.

As we walked along together, he asked me some questions relative to the character and circumstances of Mr. Crawford. I candidly imparted to him my sentiments on the subject ; and though I was then unacquainted with my relation’s want of principle, I could observe that the character I gave him did not seem to make a very favourable impression on my companion. Just as we arrived at the door, he desired I would inform Mrs. Crawford, that Mr. Sykes would be glad to wish her joy of her son. On hearing the name of Sykes, I could not have been more terrified had his brother-in-law, Captain Bellamy, my mother’s husband, unshrouded himself, and stood before me. I was just composed enough to stammer out, “ I will, Sir ;” and then I hastily entered the house.

Having informed Mrs. Crawford of the name of her visitor, as he had requested, I
ran

ran to acquaint my mother with it also ; who was as much alarmed as myself. But as it had dropped in the course of conversation that he was to return to London, upon some very particular business, the next morning, we thought it most prudent for her not to appear during that day. And this was no injudicious determination ; as I found the old gentleman did not seem to have the most favourable opinion of our sex, and if provoked, as he probably might have been with her, would not have stopped short of brutality. Had therefore my mother fallen in his way, he might have revenged, in too rough a manner, her imposition on his brother-in-law, Captain Bellamy.

As it was now too late to expect the master of the family home that day, I endeavoured to entertain my companion as well as I could during the evening. I could not help thinking that he seemed to eye me at times with a glance of pity and suspicion. The sequel will verify the observation of Shakspeare, "That the thief suspects each bush an officer." He however, upon the whole, appeared to be pleased with my company, and when we separated paid me many compliments ; and that with a plain sincerity, which greatly flattered me. He set off early in the morning. But in the evening, when he made his bow (to use a theatrical expression) he left me a token of his generosity, opulence,

opulence, and liberality, for the little gentleman who had just entered upon the stage of life, with a desire that I would stand godmother.

I fear this narrative part of my history will not prove very entertaining to you; but as many other circumstances, yet to be related, are dependent upon it, I find it necessary to insert these. I will, however, cut it as short as possible.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

May 4, 17—.

WHEN my fat cousin returned, he brought with him a train of jolly companions to hunt the next day. As soon as I fell in his way, he accosted me with saying, "Well, Miss! I have blown you. " The old codger was very inquisitive, when " I met him; yet, notwithstanding, he likes " you. But"—Here I stopped him, as I was apprehensive of a stroke of what he termed wit, at the expence of my mother. She luckily was not present, or most certainly she would not have kept within the bounds of good manners, had her nephew popped out what was upon his tongue. In a short time he resumed the conversation; telling me he

was sorry that old Square-toes was obliged, by the failure of a house at Antwerp, to go out of town immediately; "otherwise, who knows," said he, "but that by the help of your tongue and my cellar, we may have taken him in!"

A blush threw its crimson veil over my face as he said this. Upon observing which, he recollected himself and thus continued: "Nay, don't blush, I only meant that we would have tried to get him *to make a will in your favour.*" I dwell the longer on this conversation, which I give *verbatim*, as it will furnish you with some insight into the character of my *upright* cousin, and prepare your mind for an event which happened some years after. Though I had taken a dislike to my relation as a man, yet he might be, for ought I know, what is usually denominated a *good* attorney. The meaning of which I take to be, that he kept within the limits of the law, and was as *honest* as his profession would allow him to be. As this does not require any great delicacy of sentiment, and I consider people as accountable for no more than they know, I contented myself with despising him in silence.

I never wish to cast *undue* reflections on any profession, but it seems to be the *general* opinion, that there are, comparatively, very few men of *real integrity* in that branch of the law. The axiom "That what every one
" says

"says must be true," is founded on reason and experience. I have been convinced of the truth of it, in this point, to my cost. Whether this propensity to dishonesty arises from the opportunities which so frequently present themselves in the practice of the law, and *tempt* the professors to avail themselves of them; or whether a turn of mind to take advantage both of friend and foe, of client as well as opponent, be imbibed by the very study of it, I will not pretend to determine. But so it is; to the sorrow and cost of millions.

As I much wished to be at Mr. Rich's, where I should have the pleasure of the company of my former intimates, his daughters; company far more agreeable to me than what I now enjoyed; I prevailed on my mother to shorten her visit. At length the wished-for day arrived. Mr. Rich lent his carriage, and we soon found ourselves at Cowley. Here we were received with the greatest cordiality by the master of the family, and with unfeigned joy by the younger part of it; but with formality and reserve by the mistress of the house. This lady having been converted to Methodism, now thought of nothing but praying and accumulating wealth for herself and her spouse. For those good people seldom neglect that grand concern, however they may
censure

censure such worldly wisdom in the unconverted.

Upon the death of his first wife Mr. Rich had married this lady. Her name before that event took place was Mrs. Stevens. She had formerly been bar-maid at Bret's Coffee-House, was afterwards an actress, but had been several years his housekeeper. She was at that time in a very mediocre situation in the theatre. She had been the intimate friend of Miss Nassau, who succeeded Miss Fenton, afterwards Dutchess of Bolton, in Gay's Polly Peachum. By *her advice*, as I have been informed, Miss Nassau put herself under the protection of the late earl of Orford, son of the famed Sir Robert Walpole. By the further management of Mrs. Rich, a match was brought about between a brother of her's, whose name was Wilford, and a sister of that lady's. This was insuring Mr. Wilford a fortune, as Lord Orford was at that time Auditor of the Exchequer, and had numberless places in his gift. Mr. Wilford was accordingly provided for; and was upon a visit with his wife, at Cowley, when we arrived there.

We likewise found there Mrs. Ward from the theatre at Edinburgh, whom Mr. Rich had engaged for the ensuing season. She was accompanied by a frightful being, to whom she gave the title of husband. This lady

lady had one of the most beautiful faces I ever beheld. But her figure was vulgar to a degree. By the stoop and magnitude of her shoulders, it might be imagined that she had formerly carried milk-pails. Her beauty would have been much more conspicuous in that line, or with a chain and knife fastened to her apron-string, than in the character of a queen or young princess. Yet, notwithstanding this dissimilitude of appearance, and being pregnant into the bargain, it was determined that she should debute in Cordelia, the youngest daughter of King Lear.

In conversation with Mr. Rich upon an engagement with me, my mother informed him of the terms offered me by Mr. Garrick, through Mr. Delany, the season before last; and as he made no objection to the salary, she concluded that his intention was to give me the same sum. When we returned to town the manager informed me that he intended Mrs. Ward should make her appearance as soon as possible, her pregnancy rendering such a step necessary; and that he considered me as a happy *corpse de reserve*. Mrs. Woffington, highly offended at her quondam admirer, Mr. Garrick's chusing rather to appear with Mrs. Pritchard than with her, had engaged herself with Mr. Rich; and was to open the campaign with her capital part,

part, that of Sir Harry Wildair.—Theatrical revolutions are as frequent, and owe their rise to the same principles, as those in the political world.—Pique, resentment, ambition, or interest, which ever motive happens to preponderate, brings them about. And the arrangement lasts in both as long as convenience suits.

G. A. B.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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ite

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